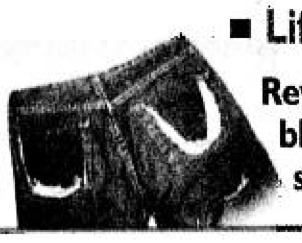
Entertainment / A2-1

Willie Revillame not invited to wedding of ex-wife, Princess Punzalan

■ News / A2

JI-Abu linkup worries experts on antiterror

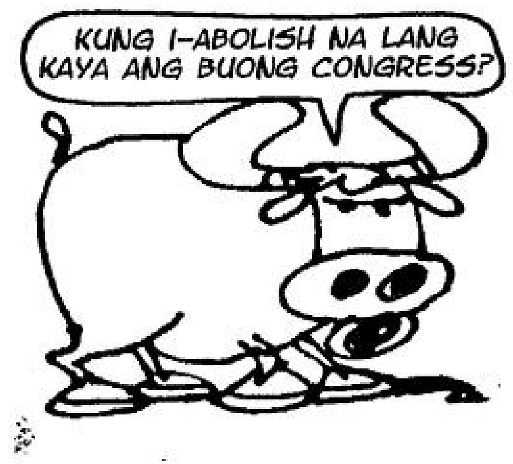


■ Lifestyle / E1

Reworking the basic blue jeans into a stylized, unique pair

■ Metro / A22

DOJ files kidnap charges against Dennis Roldan


KUNG I-ABOLISH NA LANG KAYA ANG BUONG CONGRESS?

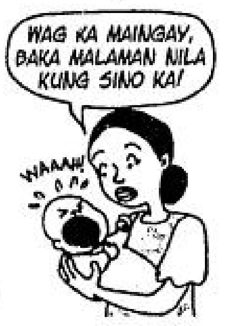
PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

IDs for newborn babies, too

HACIENDA REMEDIOS, La Carlota City—President Macapagal-Arroyo wants newborn babies to be part of the proposed national Identification system.

She wants the infants issued ID cards, which are to also serve as their

IDS/ A20


WAG KA MAINGAY, BAKA MALAMAN NILA KUNG SINO KA!
WAAAH!

Friday, March 4, 2005 ★★ 66 pages / 8 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 86 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Scrap Senate, House urges

Miriam: Let's just all commit suicide

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

ENRAGED by the Senate approval of the P907.56-billion budget for this year that cut the pork barrel of legislators by 40 percent, several members of the House of Representatives called for the abolition of the upper chamber.

Rep. Jose Solis (Kampi, Sorsogon) said the Senate was an "appendix of Congress" that should be promptly severed.

Claiming that many senators had become more concerned with winning "brownie points," House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the country could be "in a better state if it has a single parliament, with each member representing a clearly defined constituency."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said senators should expect members of the House to retaliate.

She suggested that all senators and congressmen just commit mass suicide as the "best public service to the people."

As the word war escalated, Senate President Franklin Drilon called for a "ceasefire" in the budget row with the House, saying the quarrel could result in the further deterioration of relations between the two chambers.

"I will go out of my way to try to patch things up, smooth the ruffled feathers because really there should be no reason to start finger-pointing," Drilon said. "I'm calling for a ceasefire, we should tone down the rhetoric."

He said he would seek out Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. as soon as the House leader returned from Belgium.

"Once Joe comes back, I will sit down with him to find ways to avoid any further deterioration of relations because if this is not patched up, it can affect the legislative program of the President," Drilon said.

Drilon said he received a call from former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentevella, expressing concern over the "deteriorating relations"

SCRAP/ A10

2005 BUDGET

₱302B for debts; ₱290B for salaries

A PER CAPITA approach to "deconstructing the (P907.56-billion) budget" shows that it favors debt service over social services, Sen. Ralph Recto said yesterday.

"The per capita spending for interest payments is P3,581 this year. For education, it's about P1,608. For health, it's less than P130 per Filipino in one year, or about P11 a month," he said.

Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said the controversial House-approved budget that the Senate adopted on Tuesday prioritized the "sumo twins" of debt service and government payroll over social services.

He said the outlay for debt service, less principal payments, stood at P301.7 billion, while the allocation for government payroll was P289.2 billion.

"For every budget peso, 33 centavos will go to interest payments on the debt of the government, and 32 centavos will be for the salaries of its one million workers," Recto said in a statement.

Of the remaining 35 centavos, 17 centavos will be rationed off to local governments as part of their share of the national taxes, he said, referring to the P151 billion in internal revenue allotments.

"After deducting the amount for government supplies and operations, what is left of the budget peso is a measly eight centavos for infrastructure projects," Recto said.

The allotment for infrastructure projects translates to P72 billion, an amount that falls short of the P221 billion needed to trans-

P302B/ A10

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

President Arroyo and Sen. Mar Roxas exchange ideas and pleasantries with the media on Thursday during the launching of the Consumer Welfare Booth, Kilohan ng Bayan and price monitoring board at the Teodoro Arcenas Trade Center in Roxas City, Capiz. EDWIN BACASMAS

Tarlac councilor shot dead

By Ronaldo Dizon
PDI Central Luzon Desk

TARLAC CITY—A city official supporting striking workers of Hacienda Luisita was shot and killed here yesterday, fueling fears of more violence at the vast sugar estate owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino.

Councilor Abelardo Ladera, 43, a member of the left-wing party-list group Bayan Muna, died from a single bullet wound in the chest while being rushed to Central Luzon Doctors' Hospital, police said.

Ladera was buying parts for his jeepney at an auto supply store in Barangay Paraiso at around 1 p.m. when he was shot, police said. His companion, identified as Alberto Sebastian, was unhurt.

Bayan Muna and other militant leaders strongly condemned the killing and pointed

TARLAC/ A10

Lawmaker dares Church to live debate

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christian V. Esguerra

THE CATHOLIC Church has been challenged to a live debate on a bill that would define the government's family planning policy and implement programs to address overpopulation.

"A national debate will give the people the proper and true information on the issues and unmask the peddlers of lies and purveyors of misinformation," Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman said yesterday in a statement.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and allied groups are to hold a protest rally today at the Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila against the proposed law, as well as the controversial "Ligtas Buntis" program of the Department of Health.

Lagman also urged the Church to desist from purportedly spreading wrong information and pressuring congressmen to oppose the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act of 1995.

"The Church's damning incantations against House Bill No. 3773 have crept from the pulpits to congressional offices," he said, adding that some of his colleagues "temporized" or momentarily withheld their support after "monsignors" talked to them or sent

LAWMAKER/ A20

What's in a name change? Mapuans seek investigation

By Tina G. Santos

ALARMED over the impending change in name of Mapua Institute of Technology (MIT) to Malayan Colleges, the National Alliance of Mapua Alumni (Nama) is seeking a formal congressional probe on the real motive for dropping the name of an 80-year-old educational institution with a solid reputation for its architecture and engineering programs.

Montalban Mayor Pedro "Ping" S. Cuerpo, Nama spokesperson, also called on all concerned to unite and fight for the retention of the name of their alma mater. *(See story on Page A8.)*

Cuerpo said Nama strongly believed the Yuchengco Group of Companies, which bought the school from the Mapua family in 1999, may want to change the Mapua name to escape tax liabilities.

One of the country's premier conglomerates, the Yuchengco group also owns nonlife Malayan Insurance, Grepalife, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and business interests in

WHAT'S/ A8

HELPING HAND FROM DOWN UNDER: Australian Ambassador Ruth Pearce reaches out to the children of the Manobo-Matigsalog tribe in Marilog village, Davao City, where now rises a learning center built and equipped by the Australian-funded Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao.

GERMELINA LACORTE/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

ninoyaquino.com for sale on eBay

By Joey G. Alarilla
INQ7.net

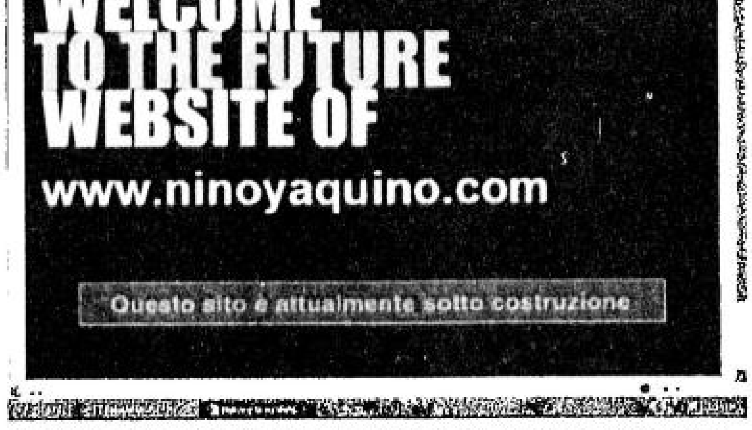
THEY say you can buy and sell almost anything on eBay, the world's biggest online auction site. Filipinos, however, might be surprised to find out that domain names associated with Philippine hero Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. are now being sold to the highest bidder.

Ninoyaquino.com is now eBay Item No. 5755677255, with the auction starting on Feb. 28 and ending on March 10. The starting price is 99 cents.

The auction comes shortly after the Philippines celebrated on Feb. 25 the 19th anniversary of the first Edsa People Power Revolution that ousted the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and that swept Aquino's widow, Corazon Aquino, to power in 1986.

So far, no one has made a bid for the domain. Part of the eBay item description for Ni-

NINOYAQUINO/ A10



WELCOME TO THE FUTURE WEBSITE OF
www.ninoyaquino.com
Questo sito è attualmente sotto costruzione

GOING, going, gone. The auction of Ninoy Aquino's future website is ongoing until March 10. Starting price is 99 cents. The owner says she bought the domain name because she considers Ninoy a hero.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/04/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Second FRONTPAGE

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Not all JIs are Indons, says envoy

DAVAO CITY—Philippine officials should be more circumspect in tagging Jemaah Islamiyah suspects as Indonesians, an Indonesian diplomat said yesterday.

This kind of stereotyping was of serious concern to Indonesia which has also suffered from the hands of the JI and has been working to stamp out the terror group, said Consul Bambang Gunawan of the Indonesian consulate here.

Gunawan said the JI was a transnational terror group with members from Malaysia, the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries.

Earlier, the police and the military said about 30 JI suspects from Indonesia had entered the Philippines and were sowing terror in Mindanao.

"I would appreciate it if authorities make a single arrest rather than come out with these statements," Gunawan said.

He said such "general statements" were worrying as Indonesian citizens visit the Philippines for business or have been staying in the Philippines as migrants.

Col. Rodolfo del Rosario, commander of Task Force Davao, a military antiterror unit, said the information about the more that 30 foreign terrorists, mostly from Indonesia, came from an "A-1" report.

"The military has reasonable belief that there is presence of the JI group in Central Mindanao," said Del Rosario.

But he admitted that the information concerning the JI presence in Mindanao "should be validated."

Last year, the military said it believed that a JI member Dulmatin, alias Joko Pitono and Amar Usman, who was on Indonesia's most-wanted list, was among those killed in a military air strike in the Liguasan marsh in November. His body was never recovered.

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

JI-Abu linkup worries experts on antiterror

THE ABU Sayyaf kidnap gang is slowly transforming into a major terrorist group capable of carrying out Bali-type attacks with the help of the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group, experts said yesterday.

"The Abu Sayyaf is back in business and we should be very concerned," said Zachary Abuza, director of the East Asian studies program at Simmons College in Boston, after a lecture in Manila.

The JI's strategy is to "insert" itself in conflict areas and foment sectarian violence and there has been evidence to suggest that the Abu Sayyaf has received some form of training from them, Abuza said.

The Abu Sayyaf, a small Muslim group that operates in several islands in Mindanao, gained notoriety in 2000 and 2001 with a series of kidnappings of Western tourists, including Americans.

More recently, the group has claimed credit for the fire bombing of a ferry on Manila Bay last year that killed more than 100 people, and simultaneous bombings of three targets in Manila, Davao and General Santos cities last month that left 12 people dead.

Sinister conspiracy

Abuza, an acknowledged expert on cross-border terrorism, noted that the Abu Sayyaf's recent bombing attacks appear to have the hallmarks of JI, whose alleged leader Abu Bakar Bashir was convicted in Jakarta yesterday for taking part in a "sinister conspiracy" that led to the Bali bombings in Indonesia that left 202 dead in 2002.

At the moment, Abuza said the Abu Sayyaf has the capability of carrying out "relatively small" bombings compared to the attacks elsewhere in the region that were blamed on JI, which has been using car bombs.

"Technologically, they haven't quite crossed the threshold that the JI has," Abuza said, but "they certainly are" learning quick.

"There is no reason why they can't learn this stuff," he said, noting that bomb-making materials were readily available in Mindanao.

He noted that Philippine authorities last week arrested two Indonesians and a Malaysian member of JI in connection with a foiled plot to bomb US and local targets. Arrested with them was an Abu Sayyaf member, and police said a 10-man Abu Sayyaf cell was still operating somewhere in Manila.

The Abu Sayyaf "re-entered the arena of terrorism," with the ferry bombing, Abuza said.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales had earlier called the Abu Sayyaf "the most dangerous" Muslim militant group in the Philippines.

Even more so than the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the main Muslim separatist group waging rebellion in the south since 1978, Gonzales said in a briefing paper to the government.

"Say what you want about the MILF, but it has never engaged in an all-out sectarian (war), it has never made this into a religious war," he said.

Balik-Islam

He said more and more Filipino Christians were also being recruited to join the "Balik Islam" (Return to Islam) movement spearheaded by the Abu Sayyaf, which authorities believe to number around 400 from a high of over 1,000 members in 2000.

Julkipli Wadi, a professor in Islamic studies at the University of the Philippines, said that it was natural for the Abu Sayyaf to seek "linkages" outside of the country.

"It is a way to broaden their network and boost their organization," Wadi said, but added that the group has a long way to go before it acquires the capabilities of the JI.

"To be able to say that they have become a major regional terrorist group is an overstatement in the sense that this could be part of an attempt (by the military) to just prop up a supposedly local bandit group," Wadi said.

"Even before this rhetoric on terrorism, there is already the ASG. Except that now, they may have grown big with the alleged presence of the JI," he said.

The government earlier said the Abu Sayyaf was a "spent force" after a US-backed massive military operation began in 2000 and flushed them out from their southern strongholds.

The group was founded in the early 1990s by Afghan-trained mujahidin Abubakar Abdurajak Janjalani to fight for a separatist state in Mindanao. Janjalani died in a clash with police in 1998 and factions within the group disintegrated into banditry, specializing in kidnapping.

In 2000 it kidnapped and later ransomed off a group of mostly European tourists, and the following year three Americans and a group of Filipinos. Two of the Americans died in captivity and the Abu Sayyaf earned a place in the terrorist organization list of the US state department. *AFP*

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Per DTI Region 7 Permit No. 025, Series of 2005

Kidnappers seize 2 businessmen in Iligan, demand ransom

DAVAO CITY—A still unidentified group snatched two businessmen in Iligan City on Wednesday evening, the military said yesterday.

Col. Benjamin Dolorfino, commander of the Joint Task Force Ranao, identified the victims as Gerald Tomawis and engineer Vincent Jariol.

Dolorfino said Tomawis and Jariol left Jariol's house for a drive around the city about 10 p.m. Wednesday and failed to return.

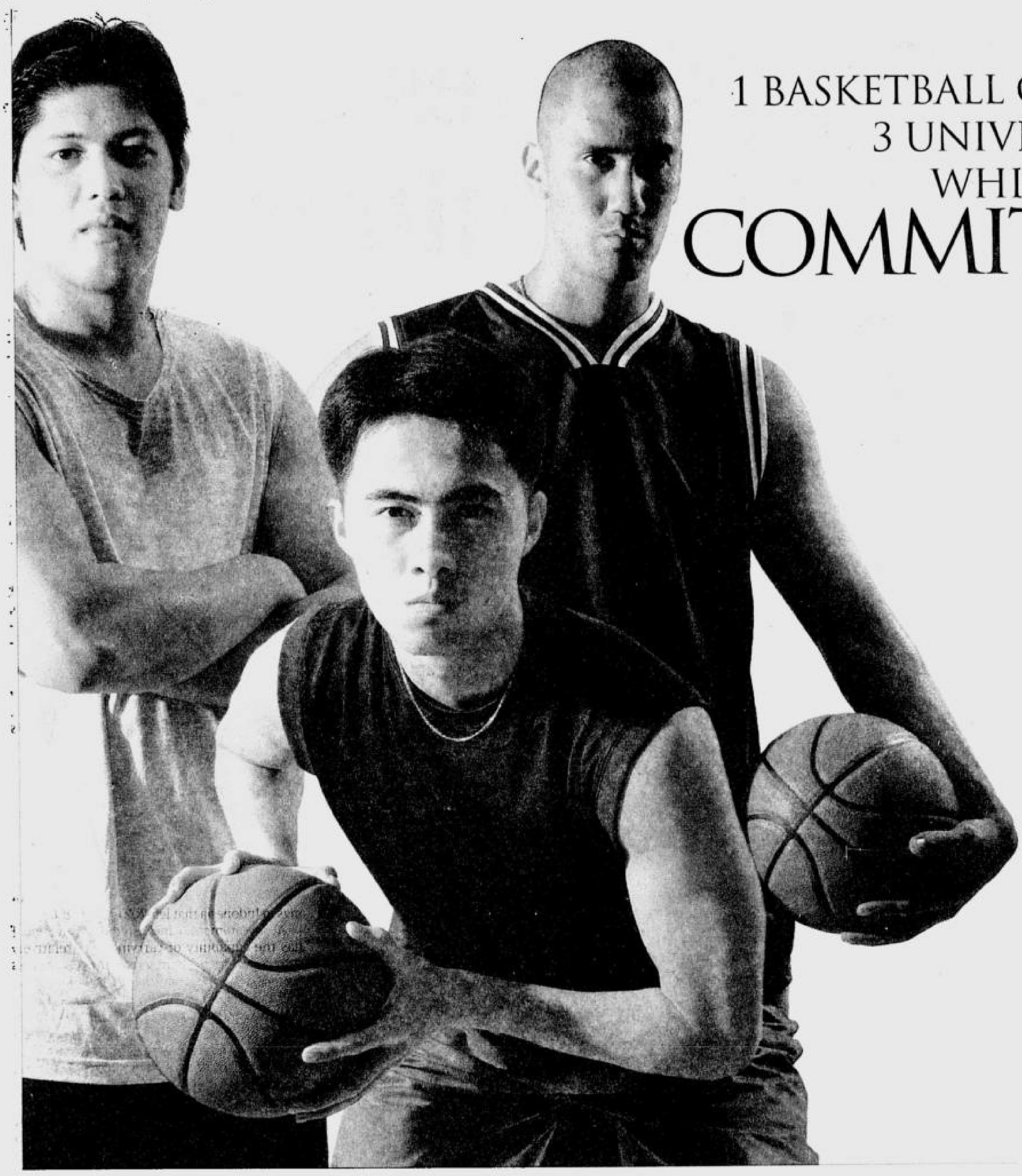
He said that morning, the kidnappers got in touch with Jariol's wife informing her of the ransom demand.

"Engineer Jariol's wife received a call from the abductors yesterday morning and demanded an undisclosed amount," Dolorfino told the INQUIRER.

He said Jariol also managed to talk with his wife and told her that he had a head injury.

Dolorfino said Jariol was hit in the head when he tried to resist the abduction.

Soldiers recovered Jariol's Starex Van. *Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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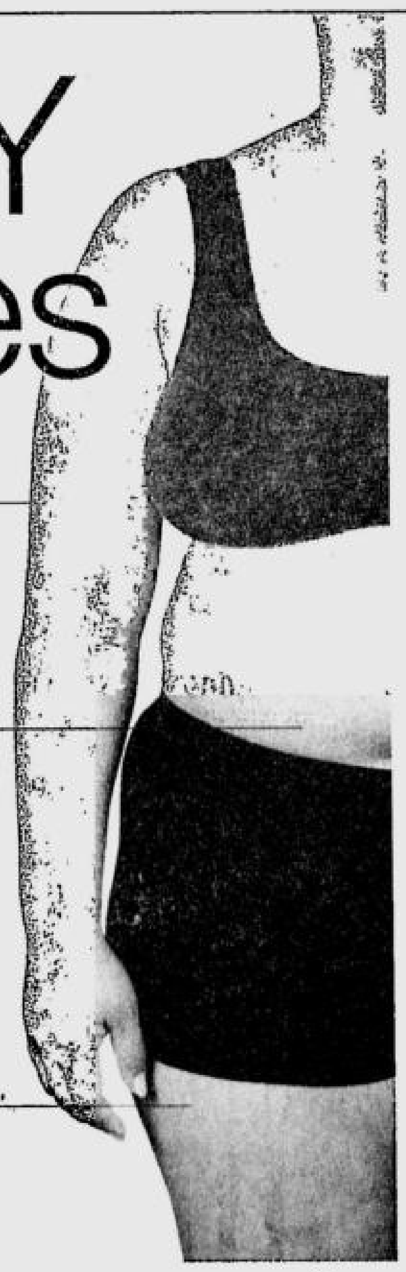

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Miriam doubts accord on Spratlys

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago yesterday expressed skepticism over reports that the Philippines had settled its dispute with China over ownership of the oil-rich Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

"I don't think that there has been an agreement on who owns the Spratlys," said Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, in reaction to reports that the decades-long dispute had been resolved.

If there was any agreement at all, Santiago pointed out, it was an agreement on setting aside the issue of ownership of the Spratlys and focusing instead on revenue-sharing arrangement on the use of natural resources in the chain of islands.

"I think the agreement is, as China has always advocated, that the issue of ownership has been sidestepped and that the parties will focus instead on the revenue-sharing arrangement or profit-sharing arrangement concerning the natural resources of the Spratly islands particularly the suspected oil deposits," she told reporters.

The Philippines said on Wednesday that a dispute with Beijing over the Spratlys had been resolved and that both sides would work together to exploit the area's oil deposits.

The state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, who was in China last Tuesday and Wednesday for a visit, as saying that "disputes and conflicts [in the Spratlys] are all over now.".

Romulo ratified a memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation signed last November, according to reports. The agreement was to turn South China Sea from a regional flash point into an area of cooperation, peace and development.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson said the memorandum of agreement was not meant to abandon the Philippines' claim.

"I don't think that's the intention," said Ignacio Bunye, when asked if the government had given up the fight.

On the question whether the "understanding" between Manila and Beijing would give the Philippines an assurance that China would stop its expansion activities in the Spratlys, Bunye only had this to say: "I believe China would be a very good neighbor."

Santiago, however, welcomed the possibility of a future defense agreement between Manila and Beijing, saying this would be a "good fallback position" if ever the Mutual Defense Treaty between Manila and Washington, D.C. is terminated.

Philippine and US forces have been holding a series of joint exercises for years under the MDT's Visiting Forces Agreement, which is now under review.

"In any event, China is well on its way to becoming the next superpower. Today the United States is the sole superpower of the world, but it's on the decline," she said.

Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the caption of a front page photo misstated the name of the US ambassador to the Philippines. The ambassador's name is Francis J. Ricciardone—not Richard Ricciardonne.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a headline in Across the Nation on Page A16 should have read "Solar power fully energizes Capiz"—not "Power from solar system fully energizes Capiz."

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Migrante slams KL treatment of Pinoys

By Jerome Aning

THE ONGOING crackdown against illegal immigrants in Malaysia is anything but humane, contrary to the Philippine government's assertion, the migrant workers group Migrante said.

Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado yesterday criticized Malacañang for "trying to project" the crackdown as humane and saying that no Filipino would be harmed.

Regalado said the government was "harping" on getting those Filipino illegals who had voluntarily left Malaysia earlier re-employed in that country, while not doing anything about the welfare of those who had stayed behind.

Regalado recalled that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had said the Malaysian government would "go hard" against the estimated 1.6 undocumented and overstaying immigrants in Malaysia following the end of the amnesty period last month.

Most of the illegals are from Indonesia and the Philippines. Others are from Burma (Myanmar), Bangladesh, Nepal, India, East Timor and Sri Lanka.

"How can Malacañang say the condition of undocumented migrants—who are clinging to jobs in the construction, plantation and service industries [there] in the face of unemployment in [this] country—was not a worrisome situation," Regalado said.

She said reports by nongovernment organizations Tenaganita (Women's Force) in Malaysia and Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants in Hong Kong revealed the following:

- All Malaysian prisons were filled with illegal aliens even before the crackdown began on March 1. The government was looking for vacant buildings to house more undocumented workers.
- Members of the 560,000-strong People's Volunteer Corps (also called Relas) tasked to implement the crackdown will be paid 80 ringgits (P1,144) daily plus 100 ringgits (P1,430) for every undocumented alien arrested.
- The Relas were not trained in humane arrest procedures, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Hence, the crackdown was highly open to abuse of authority and due process will not be observed.
- Undocumented Filipinos would be subjected to arrest, a minimum 14-day detention, caning and deportation.
- Those who entered legally but overstayed their visas would not be caned. There are no procedures, however, to distinguish between undocumented workers and those who had run away to escape abusive employers.
- At least 800 Filipino domestic workers were found by Tenaganita to have cases of unpaid wages. Their visas were not renewed and most had become undocumented.
- Those who would opt to legalize their status must pay up to 3,000 ringgits (P42,900) to the Malaysian government.

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Miriam doubts accord on Spratlys

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago yesterday expressed skepticism over reports that the Philippines had settled its dispute with China over ownership of the oil-rich Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

"I don't think that there has been an agreement on who owns the Spratlys," said Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, in reaction to reports that the decades-long dispute had been resolved.

If there was any agreement at all, Santiago pointed out, it was an agreement on setting aside the issue of ownership of the Spratlys and focusing instead on revenue-sharing arrangement on the use of natural resources in the chain of islands.

"I think the agreement is, as China has always advocated, that the issue of ownership has been sidestepped and that the parties will focus instead on the revenue-sharing arrangement or profit-sharing arrangement concerning the natural resources of the Spratly islands particularly the suspected oil deposits," she told reporters.

The Philippines said on Wednesday that a dispute with Beijing over the Spratlys had been resolved and that both sides would work together to exploit the area's oil deposits.

The state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, who was in China last Tuesday and Wednesday for a visit, as saying that "disputes and conflicts [in the Spratlys] are all over now.".

Romulo ratified a memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation signed last November, according to reports. The agreement was to turn South China Sea from a regional flash point into an area of cooperation, peace and development.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson said the memorandum of agreement was not meant to abandon the Philippines' claim.

"I don't think that's the intention," said Ignacio Bunye, when asked if the government had given up the fight.

On the question whether the "understanding" between Manila and Beijing would give the Philippines an assurance that China would stop its expansion activities in the Spratlys, Bunye only had this to say: "I believe China would be a very good neighbor."

Santiago, however, welcomed the possibility of a future defense agreement between Manila and Beijing, saying this would be a "good fallback position" if ever the Mutual Defense Treaty between Manila and Washington, D.C. is terminated.

Philippine and US forces have been holding a series of joint exercises for years under the MDT's Visiting Forces Agreement, which is now under review.

"In any event, China is well on its way to becoming the next superpower. Today the United States is the sole superpower of the world, but it's on the decline," she said.

Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the caption of a front page photo misstated the name of the US ambassador to the Philippines. The ambassador's name is Francis J. Ricciardone—not Richard Ricciardonne.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a headline in Across the Nation on Page A16 should have read "Solar power fully energizes Capiz"—not "Power from solar system fully energizes Capiz."

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Migrante slams KL treatment of Pinoys

By Jerome Aning

THE ONGOING crackdown against illegal immigrants in Malaysia is anything but humane, contrary to the Philippine government's assertion, the migrant workers group Migrante said.

Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado yesterday criticized Malacañang for "trying to project" the crackdown as humane and saying that no Filipino would be harmed.

Regalado said the government was "harping" on getting those Filipino illegals who had voluntarily left Malaysia earlier re-employed in that country, while not doing anything about the welfare of those who had stayed behind.

Regalado recalled that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had said the Malaysian government would "go hard" against the estimated 1.6 undocumented and overstaying immigrants in Malaysia following the end of the amnesty period last month.

Most of the illegals are from Indonesia and the Philippines. Others are from Burma (Myanmar), Bangladesh, Nepal, India, East Timor and Sri Lanka.

"How can Malacañang say the condition of undocumented migrants—who are clinging to jobs in the construction, plantation and service industries [there] in the face of unemployment in [this] country—was not a worrisome situation," Regalado said.

She said reports by nongovernment organizations Tenaganita (Women's Force) in Malaysia and Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants in Hong Kong revealed the following:

- All Malaysian prisons were filled with illegal aliens even before the crackdown began on March 1. The government was looking for vacant buildings to house more undocumented workers.
- Members of the 560,000-strong People's Volunteer Corps (also called Relas) tasked to implement the crackdown will be paid 80 ringgits (P1,144) daily plus 100 ringgits (P1,430) for every undocumented alien arrested.
- The Relas were not trained in humane arrest procedures, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Hence, the crackdown was highly open to abuse of authority and due process will not be observed.
- Undocumented Filipinos would be subjected to arrest, a minimum 14-day detention, caning and deportation.
- Those who entered legally but overstayed their visas would not be caned. There are no procedures, however, to distinguish between undocumented workers and those who had run away to escape abusive employers.
- At least 800 Filipino domestic workers were found by Tenaganita to have cases of unpaid wages. Their visas were not renewed and most had become undocumented.
- Those who would opt to legalize their status must pay up to 3,000 ringgits (P42,900) to the Malaysian government.

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But Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, after meeting with Prime Minister Badawi, expressed satisfaction at the "fair" treatment illegal Filipino workers were getting in Malaysia.

"The Filipino workers are being treated fairly and in a humane way," said Romulo who also met with Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar and Home Minister Azmi Khalid. *With Julie S. Alipala and Rolly A. San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.; AP*

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Inquirer cartoonist shares NCCA plum

THE PHILIPPINE Daily Inquirer editorial cartoonist Gilbert Daroy and the Philippine Star's Rene Aranda tied for the top prize of last month's "Sining-Guhit" editorial cartoon and comic strip contest of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in this year's National Arts Month.

Daroy's entry, with an anticorruption theme, bested 113 other editorial and cartoon strip entries from national and regional newspapers.

INQUIRER comic strip artists Jose Miguel "Jomike" Tejido of "Mikrokosmos" and Steven Pabalinas "Divine Comedy" also got honorable mention awards for their entries.

Cash prizes and certificates were handed over to the winners by Malacañang officials led by presidential adviser on culture and NCCA Executive Director Cecile Guidote Alvarez, government Mass Media Group Secretary Cerge Remonde, Cabinet secretary Ricardo Saludo, senior deputy executive secretary Waldo Flores, and Presidential Council For Values Formation Deputy Secretary General Roger Arienda.

The awarding was held at the Malacañang grounds during the Monday flag raising ceremony where National Artist Lucrecia "King" Kasilag's works were interpreted by the Philippine Women's University (PWU) Music Ensemble and the Bayanihan Dance Troupe. The contests were supported by the Publishers Association of the Philippines Inc.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 4, 2005
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Hos 14:2-10
Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

One of the teachers of the Law came up to Jesus and asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus answered, "The first is: Hear, Israel! The Lord, our God, is One Lord; and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. And after this comes another one: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these two."

The teacher of the Law said to him, "Well spoken, Master; you are right when you say that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all our heart, with all our understanding and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves is more important than any burnt offering or sacrifice."

Jesus approved this answer and said, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Commentary

This is the week of the law and the call to obedience as a response to believing in Jesus' law of love. Now a teacher who admires Jesus and asks the wisdom question: Which commandment is first before all others? And Jesus answers in the tradition of Judaism—to love God and your neighbor with all your heart and soul and mind and resources. The teacher praises Jesus knowing the connection between love of God and one another and true worship or sacrifice to God. But knowing isn't enough. Jesus tells him that he is not far from the kingdom. It is a subtle invitation to believe in him, and follow him into the kingdom of peace and justice that declares to the world the presence of God among us. But it does not say that the man responded. Lord, draw us closer to your presence, intent on obeying you, not just knowing the right answers to the questions. Amen.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (CONSTITUTIONAL LAW)/REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—In criminal cases, the accused is entitled to a speedy disposition of the cases against him—Section 16, Article III of the 1987 Constitution provides that all persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative bodies. The "judicial bodies" envisaged in the said provision include the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Special Prosecutor. Rule 115, Section 1(h) of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure further provides that the accused has the right to have a speedy, impartial and public trial. The said rule requires that the arraignment of the accused should be held within 30 days from the date the court acquired jurisdiction over the person of the accused, unless a shorter period is provided by special law or unless excusable delays as provided in Rule 119, Section 10 of the Rules are attendant. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Corpuz vs Sandiganbayan, G. R. No. 162214, November 11, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

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Lawmen playing catch-up with terrorists, says expert

SOME quick arrests after a series of deadly bombings last month helped the government to reassure people it is well on top of the threat posed by Islamic militants.

But the truth, many analysts say, is that the authorities are mostly playing catch-up, hobbled by a lack of funds, poor cooperation among agencies, corruption and the difficulty of infiltrating the close-knit groups.

Despite years of training and on-the-ground advice by United States Special Forces, the Philippines is seen as one of the weakest links against terrorism in Southeast Asia, reinforced by a tendency to accuse and parade suspects on the slimmest of evidence. *(Related stories on Page A2)*

"I have learned never to take Philippine government statements at face value until lots of other evidence is in," said Sidney Jones, an expert on Islamic militancy in the region at the International Crisis Group.

"I get the sense they don't really know what's going on," Jones said.

A week after three blasts killed 13 people and wounded more than 150 in Manila and the cities of Davao and General Santos in Mindanao on Valentine's Day, two suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom group were arrested over the bomb on a bus in the capital.

Police say both have confessed and that there is at least one witness who saw them board the bus.

But the background of one suspect highlights the complex and fast-changing nature of Islamic militancy in the Philippines that the authorities struggle to cope with.

Abu Khalil Trinidad was a Christian who converted to Islam, police say, before he was trained in bomb-making on Mindanao.

Trinidad would fit a recent pattern of these "Balik-Islam" converts carrying out attacks with Abu Sayyaf, including the country's worst terrorist attack in February 2004 when a bomb sparked a fire on a ferry, killing at least 116 people.

"That's what gives them the biggest headache right now, because that's allowed these groups to penetrate into Luzon and Manila," said one security analyst who asked not to be identified.

The police, military and Anti-Terrorism Task Force share responsibility for combating militant groups and preventing attacks. The result is often confusion rather than cohesion.

"As bad as it is in the First World, it gets worse in conditions of scarcity. I don't get a sense they are working well together and bridging bureaucratic hurdles," the analyst said.

About half of the annual P1 billion in intelligence funds goes to the Office of the President. Not all of that money finds its way to the front lines.

During last year's elections, opposition politicians charged that the funds were used for dirty tricks such as spying on them and bankrolling President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign.

One of the biggest obstacles to improving intelligence has been infiltrating militant groups, a difficult task for even the most well-trained and funded operations.

The job has been made harder by the rise in Mindanao of a more hard-line, Middle East-influenced Islam in recent years.

Officials say Philippine intelligence was unprepared to meet this threat, having dealt with more secular Muslim rebels who were easily bought with money and government positions.

Reuters

Small players hike oil prices

BARELY a week after hiking their prices, new players Seaoil Petroleum Corp. and Flying V will again increase gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter today and tomorrow.

Seaoil's price adjustment will take effect at 6 p.m. today, while that of Flying V will be implemented at 6 a.m. tomorrow.

The oil firms said the continued rise in international crude and finished product prices had forced them to increase pump prices.

"We will endeavor to reflect on a weekly basis international product price movements while continuing to provide discounts to public utilities," Seaoil president Glenn Yu said in a text message yesterday evening.

Other oil firms, including refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., have yet to announce their own price adjustments as of press time.

Petron, Total (Philippines) Corp. and Eastern Petroleum Corp. said they would continue to monitor price movements before making any final decisions.

The regional benchmark Dubai crude jumped to a spot price of $42.71 a barrel yesterday, even higher than the high spot price of $42 a barrel registered on Feb. 25.

Abigail L. Ho

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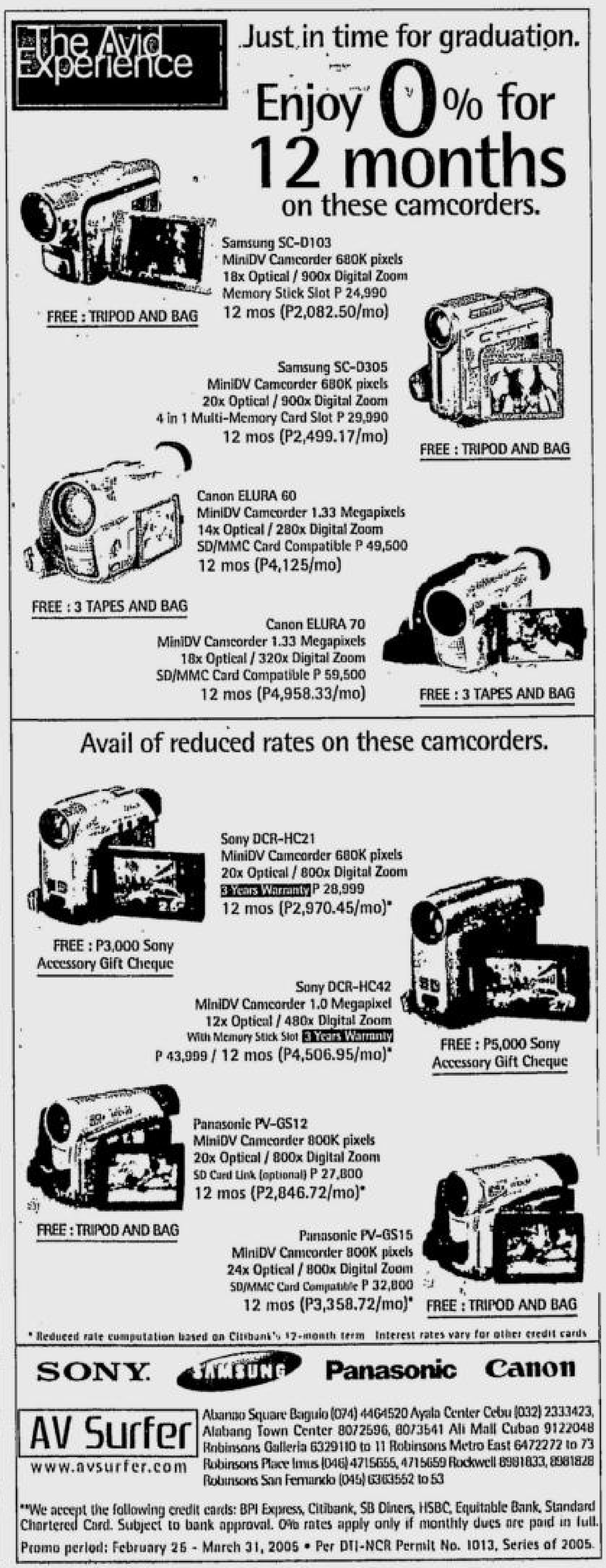
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GMA prods Congress anew on revenue bills

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday urged Congress anew to speed up the passage of her proposed revenue measures, warning that the country cannot continue to rely on borrowing to finance development.

"We have to stop financing our development by relentless borrowing, we have to finance our development through our own revenues," the President said during a visit to Roxas City yesterday.

Ms Arroyo said Congress has to immediately approve the new taxes to deal with the years of accumulated deficits that have led to the country's "very high debt."

Latest figures show that the national debt has risen to P3.8 trillion.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the national debt can still be managed so long as the executive and legislative branches get their act together.

"(The debt) is manageable provided we are able to come up with the appropriate measures that will bring in the revenues, the measures that will plug the tax leakages and the measures that will introduce efficiencies in government," Bunye told reporters.

He said the government has come up with a fiscal reform program that included tax reform, austerity, improved tax collection and anti-corruption measures.

"What we need is the joint support of executive and legislative so we could move closer to being able to fully address our debt problem," he said.

Despite the rift between the Senate and House over the passage of the 2005 budget, Malacañang expressed confidence that the two chambers can overcome their differences and pass just as swiftly the even more controversial measure increasing the value-added tax.

Last Tuesday, the Senate decided to adopt the House version of the P907.6-billion budget, paving the way for the approval of the measure without the need for a bicameral conference committee.

Even with the House and Senate at loggerheads over the controversial approval of the budget, Bunye said the President was "holding on to the word of the Senate leadership that the VAT bill could be passed before the session ends."

Christine Avendaño

Where's Rachel?

AMOG

RACHEL Soriano Amog, 14, of 6th Ave., Bgy. Soccoro, Murphy, Cubao, Quezon City has been missing for one month.

According to her grandmother Lourdes, Rachel must have packed her things and left very early in the morning. She is a Link TV chatter with the nickname BBYCRSHY. She has not been in touch with former classmates or relatives for the past month.

Any information regarding her whereabouts may be the relayed to the following numbers: (02) 628-7040; (0917) 828-1011; and (0918) 651-2349 and look for Christian or Gladys.

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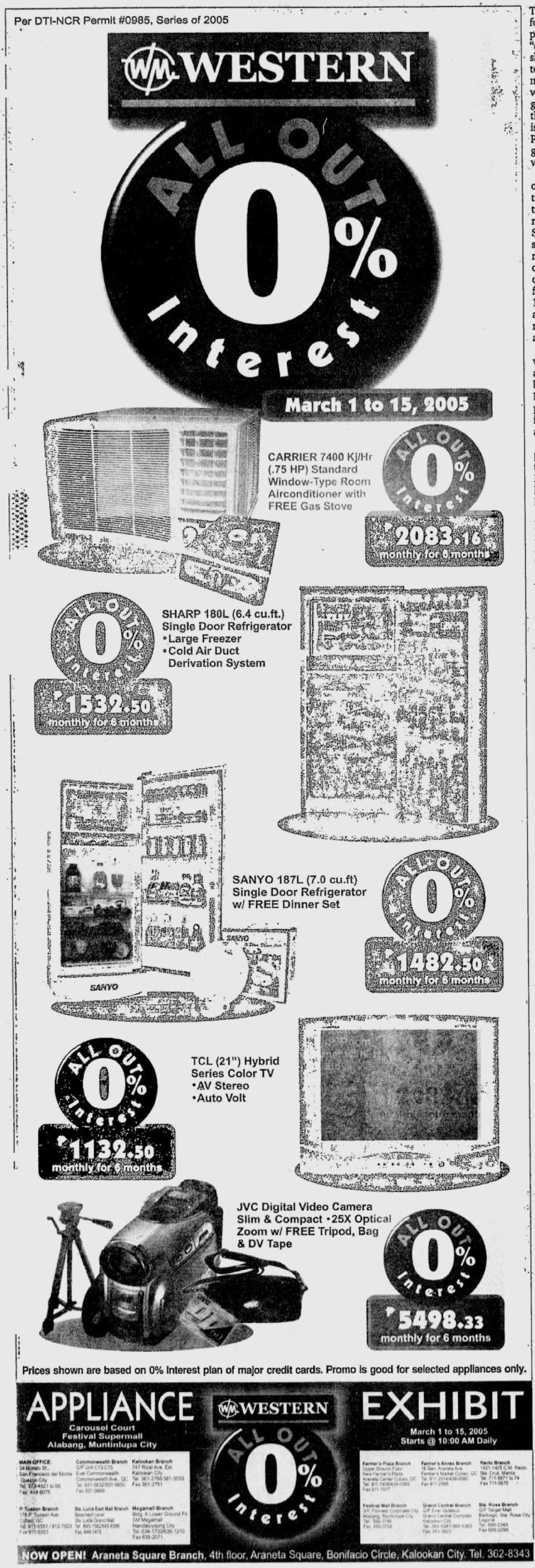
School founded in 1925 by first registered Filipino architect



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IN THE KNOW

THE MAPÚA Institute of Technology was founded on Jan. 25, 1925 by Don Tomas Mapúa, the first registered Filipino architect who "envisioned an educational institution that shall emphasize the importance of science and technology and create an impact on the economy and the quality of life of the Filipino." He was one of the first Filipino scholars sent by the government to the US during the American regime. He finished high school at Boone's Preparatory School in Berkeley, California, and graduated from Cornell University in 1911 with a degree in Architecture.

Aware that many Filipinos were deprived of the opportunity to study because they had to work during the day, he opened a non-sectarian night school for working students in a rented commercial building on Carriedo Street in Quiapo, Manila. The school initially started with 80 students enrolled in civil engineering and architecture handled by a faculty of 12 professors. Three years later, the school offered high school to give students a better foundation for technical studies in college. By 1940, five more degree programs were added—mining engineering, chemical engineering, chemistry, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering.

After the liberation of Manila, Mapúa, which was ravaged by the war, resumed operations at a new site on the northern portion of the block bounded by Doroteo Jose, Avenida Rizal, Claro M. Recto, Miserecordia Street (now Tomas Mapúa Street). The school compound was divided into two quadrangles that separated the college and the high school divisions.

In the late '50s, the institute acquired a property in Intramuros to house its architecture and upper engineering degree programs. Its general engineering programs and the high school department remained at the Doroteo Jose compound.

When Don Tomas died on Dec. 22, 1965, his only son Oscar B. Mapúa took over the reins of the school. With the expansion of its facilities, the Intramuros complex took in the entire collegiate department in 1973. More degree programs were also introduced like industrial engineering, industrial design and computer engineering.

Enters Yuchengco

On March 17, 1988, Oscar B. Mapúa passed away and his son, architect Oscar Jr., took over the presidency.

In December 1999, the ownership of Mapúa was acquired 100 percent by a business conglomerate headed by Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco through a company now known as iPeople Inc. for about a billion pesos.

Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco is a diplomat, philanthropist, business and civic leader and acknowledged by his rivals as a leader in Philippine insurance, banking, investments, construction, mining, power, oil exploration, real estate, telecommunications, agribusiness, manufacturing and trading. In 1992, he was honored as "Management Man of the Year" by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP). His businesses include Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., MICO Equities, Great Pacific Life Holdings, Pan Malayan Management and Investment Corp., among others.

Aside from its schools in Intramuros and Doroteo Jose Street in Manila, Mapúa opened in April 2002 its Makati campus in the former Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. building, located between Metropolitan and Gil Puyat Avenues. The campus now houses its Information and Technology Center and its schools of nursing, accountancy and business administration.

15,000 students

According to its webpage, Mapúa at present offers 28 courses and six graduate programs. It has 15,000 students in the college level and claims to be the biggest engineering school in the Philippines, which accounts for about 8 percent of engineering graduates every year. The institute also runs a pre-engineering high school with a population of about 1,800 students.

Sources: PDI Archives and Mapua webpage at http://www.mapua.edu.ph

What's in a name change?

From page A1

automotives, travel, tourism, construction, engineering and technology.

"We believe that the Lower House as well as the Senate should initiate a probe against Malayan Colleges not only to help us in our cause to preserve the name of a reputable Philippine educational institution but to save the country from losing billions of tax revenues," Cuerpo said.

As of yesterday afternoon, black remained the campus color as the students calling themselves United Mapuans continued to come to school in black shirts.

The protesters said that changing their school's name would be tantamount to disregarding the legacy of the school's founder, Tomas Mapua.

4 students suspended

The fight, which began on Feb. 14, turned ugly yesterday after four students were suspended for allegedly violating school rules and regulations in their protest against the change of name.

The students were suspended despite earlier pronouncements by Mapua president Reynaldo Vea that nobody would be penalized for the mass action because the school respected freedom of expression and also wanted to know the students' sentiments.

In his two-page letter issued on Wednesday, Antonio L. Mateo Jr., vice president for student affairs and prefect for students, cited specific grounds for the suspension of the four students.

Mateo said the four students are barred from entering the institute's premises in accordance with Section 77 of the Manual of Regulations for Private Schools as issued through DepEd Order No. 92.

Citing the investigation conducted by the committee on decorum, Mateo stressed that the four directly participated in various activities which disrupted the normal operations of the school.

'Shallow'

However, one of those suspended claimed that the grounds cited by the school for the suspension "were shallow and baseless."

Mateo particularly pointed to the incidents that happened on Feb. 26 and 28 where the four students were allegedly at the forefront of the group that had gathered in front of the entrance gate of Mapua's campus in Intramuros, Manila, forming a human chain, thus preventing students from attending their classes.

The four also encouraged and participated in a noise barrage in front of the school along with vehicles that were honking their horns and sounding their alarms, Mateo said, adding that the offending students also gave out flyers, pamphlets and other written statements espousing their cause.

'Threatening'

Mateo added that the four were likewise apprehended on the campus with a copy of an official memo from his office, which they reportedly had removed from the posting area.

"Your acts directly contributed in creating a threatening and coercive atmosphere," Mateo said in his letter.

The suspended students were given 72 hours to submit their formal written explanations on why they should not be charged for the offenses.

They were also ordered to appear before the committee on decorum and investigation on Tuesday.

No consultation

Meynard Austria, a member of the core group fighting for the retention of the school's name, lamented that school officials did not consult them about the change of name.

"Our point is simple. The term Mapuans is important to us. Our parents enrolled us here to graduate as Mapuans, not as Malayans," Austria said.

He clarified that he and his fellow protesters were not against the administration and were in fact appreciative of the various technological advancements that the school had implemented.

"We do not even complain every time they increase our tuition fees. All we want is just for them to retain Mapua's name as is," Austria said.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Vea for comment but a member of his staff said he was in a meeting.

University status

But in an earlier interview, Vea said the name change was a step toward the school's expansion to a university. He said the school had started offering courses other than engineering and architecture since 2000 after the takeover by the Yuchengco group. The offering of additional courses was one of the requirements for attaining university status.

Mapua's new courses are nursing, psychology, biotechnology and business administration.

Mapua at present offers 28 courses and six graduate programs.

"If the school continued to be called Mapua, we feel there might be a certain dilution also because the Mapua name is closely associated with technology, engineering," Vea told the INQUIRER.

Vea also said the board had yet to set the date for the official change of the school's name.

He told students that the name Mapua could still be used for the College of Engineering and Architecture of the Malayan University since a university could name its colleges.

Vea added the name change was never meant to relegate Mapua to the background.

"Our intention is in fact to make it better known and that is why we are going for university status," he said.

Taipans buying up schools

Cuerpo explained that schools and universities paid very minimal tax to the government compared to other businesses and this could be the real reason top corporations like YGC and other Filipino "taipans" were re-focussing their business thrust to campuses.

Cuerpo said the pattern was in place. "Business tycoons had already invested in educational institutions. The Lucio Tan group bought the University of the East in the '90s, Henry Sy perhaps owns the majority stake at the Asia Pacific College, and so on. YGC now has Mapua at its mercy."

Legacy

Cuerpo also called on all Filipinos to fight for the preservation of educational institutions—Mapua included.

He said, "Educational institutions must not be for sale. Legacies are not made overnight."

ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT?

Abalos seeks ₱1 B for ARMM election

By Jerome Aning

WHERE's our P1 billion?

Elections chair Benjamin Abalos asked this yesterday as he appealed to lawmakers to give the poll body the budget it needed for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao elections in August and the continuing voters registration.

"We cannot come up with our mandated obligations if there is no money. We don't know how to proceed with the preparations we have started or about to start," Abalos said in a hastily called press conference.

The chief of the Commission on Elections said funding for the ARMM polls was supposed to be "inserted" when the Senate and the House of Representatives tackle the 2005 national budget at the bicameral conference committee level.

The Senate, however, passed on Tuesday in toto this year's P907.56-billion spending package proposed by Malacanang and approved by the House. A bicameral conference committee only meets if there are conflicting provisions in the Senate and House versions of the bill.

Abalos is worried that Comelec may have to postpone again the ARMM elections scheduled for Aug. 8 if there is no budget for it by April or May.

And a further delay, he said, would also disrupt the schedule of pre-election activities.

Comelec is seeking P412 million from Congress if the ARMM elections are to be conducted manually. Another P134 million is needed if automated counting and election result transmission would be used. The registration is already using electronic data-capturing machines.

For the continuing registration of voters, the Comelec needs P368 million and another P72 million for the overseas absentee voting registration.

Abalos explained that after the end of registration period on Mar. 18, several weeks were needed to settle complaints of flying voters and double or multiple registrations and petitions to include or exclude registrants before Comelec can come up with permanent list of voters.

The Comelec also wants extra time to deploy its personnel and disseminate information, as well as distribute and test the automated counting machines, according to Abalos.

Abalos said that as of Feb. 25 there were 36,000 new voters, in addition to the 1.9 million old voters, who registered in the ARMM which covers the provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-tawi.

He said the poll body had petitioned the Supreme Court to allow the use for the ARMM polls of 200 to 250 of the 1,991 automated counting machines that were left idle after the high tribunal voided a multimillion-peso deal between the Comelec and the Megapacific consortium, supplier of the ACMs.

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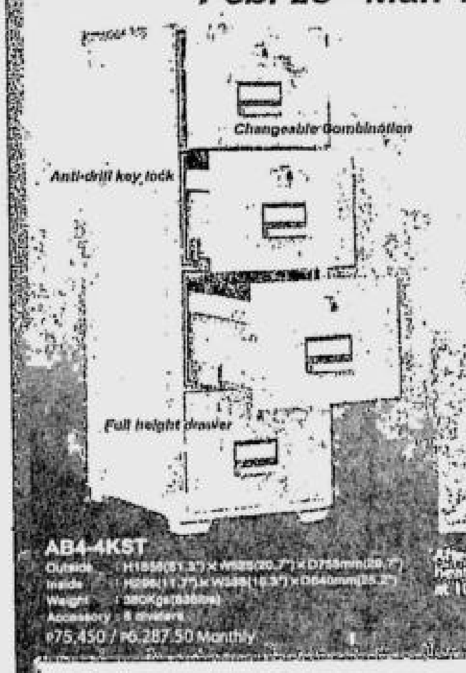

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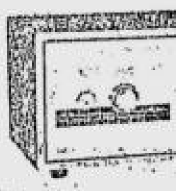

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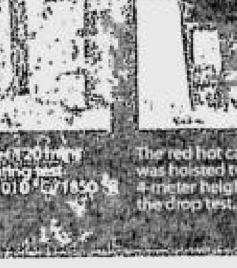

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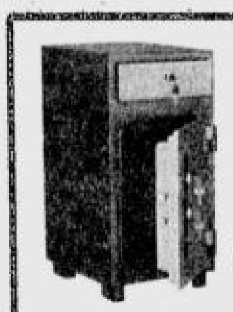

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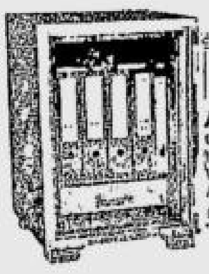

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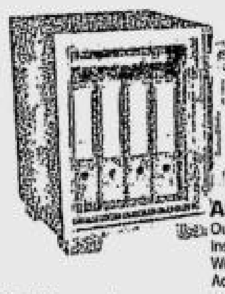

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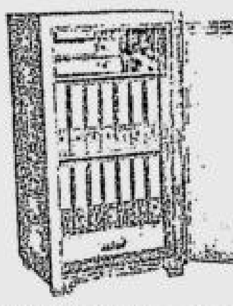

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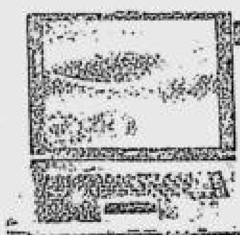

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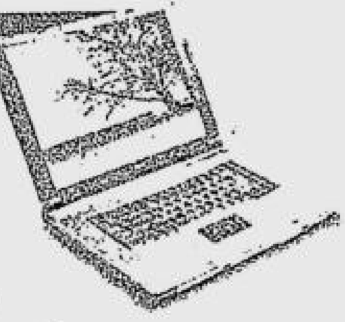

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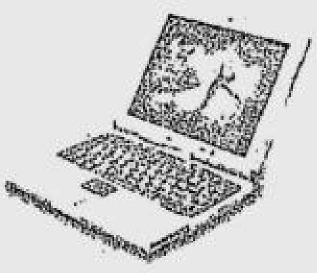

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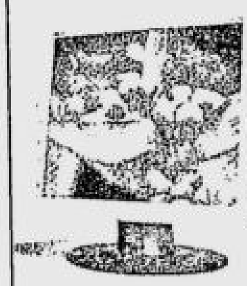

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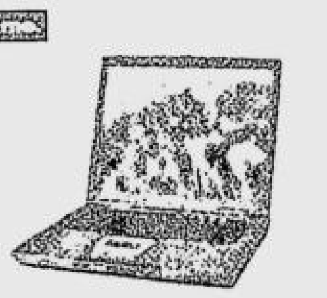

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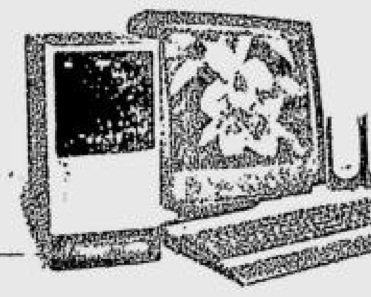

Aspire T6215N [illegible]
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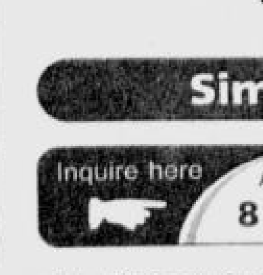

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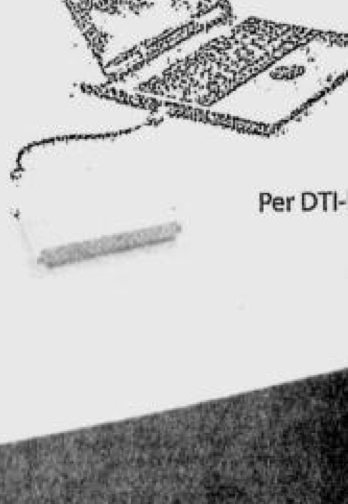

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Scrap Senate, House urges

From page A1

between the two chambers.

But Drilon said his call for a ceasefire did not mean he was admitting that the Senate was at fault when it made the unprecedented move of adopting the House-approved version in toto.

"We adopted the budget that they passed. They said this should be the budget, so what are they complaining about?" Drilon said.

The senators adopted the House-approved budget, which provides for a reduced pork barrel allocation of P120 million from P200 million for each senator and P40 million from P70 million for every House member, dispensing with the usual bicameral conference where conflicting versions are reconciled.

Some senators said they decided to adopt the House version because members of the House intended to restore their pork barrel to P70 million during the bicameral conference.

Clear winner

But members of the House did not take this sitting down. They said the senators had been caught red-handed realigning part of the intelligence funds to boost the Senate's pork barrel allocation by P1.3 billion before the senators adopted the House version.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said President Macapagal-Arroyo was the undisputed winner in the battle for the 2005 budget, which has left the reputation of the Senate and the House of Representatives in tatters after their very public fight over the pork barrel.

"President Arroyo gets her budget intact and without having to compromise her VAT (value-added tax) reforms. She is the clear winner here," Salceda said.

He said there was valid concern that the budget stalemate could stall the passage of VAT reforms (which would raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent and remove almost all exemptions) and dilute their projected revenues (more than half of the P80 billion revenue targeted by the President).

With the passage of the 2005 budget, Salceda said the President could now "employ her full might" in ensuring the passage of the VAT reforms before the Lenten break.

Retaliation

Santiago said the congressmen should be flattered instead of being angered by the Senate decision.

"They got what they wanted because they said this is the budget, so why are they angry? You have to analyze this in a deeper level—they wanted to do something in the bicam that they can no longer do," Santiago said.

"So you can expect that if this (rift) is not healed as soon as possible, because the House felt that the Senate put one over them, they will retaliate once an opportunity presents itself. That will be the result of this political farce," she said.

'Expect an ambush'

She said she expected the retaliation to come when Congress tackles the VAT bill. "I expect an ambush there."

Santiago said the bicameral conference had become a tradition so that when the Senate set this aside on Tuesday by adopting the House version of the national budget in toto, members of the House had reason to complain.

But Santiago said members of the House were sore not just because a tradition had been dispensed with.

"In this case there were some congressmen who were fully confident that if they voted for a P40-million pork barrel fund for each member, that would be increased to the past level of P70 million [in the bicam]. Naturally they are not only frustrated but embittered," Santiago said.

But Santiago said the legislators should answer whether their squabble was over the public interest or their individual interests over the pork barrel.

"Let us not call each other names, let's just address the basic problem which is how much pork barrel should each member of Congress receive," Santiago said.

Country saves P8.9 billion

Sen. Panfilo Lacson defended the Senate move, saying it saved the country P8.9 billion, the amount needed if the pork barrel was increased to P200 million and P70 million for each senator and congressman, respectively.

In the House, neophyte Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano (NP, Taguig-Pateros) cautioned his colleagues against exacerbating the row between the two chambers.

Cayetano said the House should be rebuked for earlier railroading the passage of the national budget.

The move just backfired, said Cayetano, stressing that the House failure to increase the "efficiency of spending money on the side of new programs that will directly benefit the poor will give this Congress a failing mark."

Bystander

He said House members should "learn from our mistakes," adding that the next time it passes its version of the national budget, "make sure everything is all right because you might get what you wished for. In this case, the Senate passed the House version, so we have to live with that version."

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) told the INQUIRER that the Senate decision to adopt the House-approved budget to do away with the bicam was a quarrel between majority blocs in both chambers.

He likened the role of the 28-member minority to that of a mere bystander. "They're the main actors. We're just bit players in an elaborate show," he said.

₱302B for debts; ₱290B for wages

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form "national dirt roads into two-lane concrete highways," he said.

Little nourishment

"While at first glance the nearly trillion-peso budget is big, what with many zeros in it, substance-wise only a little nourishment can be gained from it," Recto said.

Among the agencies, the Department of Education (DepEd) got the biggest allocation at P112 billion. The Constitution mandates that education gets the biggest share of the budget.

The DepEd was followed by the Department of Public Works and Highways, P49.5 billion; Department of National Defense, P46.2 billion; Department of Interior and Local Governments, P43.9 billion; Department of Agrarian Reform, P14.7 billion; Department of Agriculture, P14.3 billion; Department of Health, P10.3 billion; Department of Transportation and Communication and Department of Justice, P8 billion each; and Department of Finance, P6.8 billion. *TJ Burgonio*

Tarlac councilor shot dead

From page A1

to the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), which is based here, as being behind it. The accusation was swiftly denied by Nolcom officials.

"Ladera's killing is part of the scheme to persecute all those who are supporting the demands of the Hacienda Luisita farm and sugar mill workers against the hacienda management. Apparently, the perpetrators aim to silence the likes of Ladera," Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said.

He noted that the two-term councilor, whose candidacy was endorsed by his party in last year's elections, was a known and vocal critic of hacienda officials and an active sympathizer of the striking workers.

3 days for probers

Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, police regional commander, gave investigators three days to identify the killers. He said the Tarlac provincial police would be creating a special task force to track down the suspects.

Ladera's companion, Sebastian, said he did not notice the gunman approach the councilor. After he heard the gunshot, he said, Ladera told him, "*Pare, may tama ako* [I've been shot]," and fell.

The attending doctor at the hospital, Dr. Rommel Hernandez, said Ladera may have been shot from a distance.

"The slug fragmented as it penetrated the left side of his chest. He might have been hit from a distance as there were no signs of powder burns around the wound," Hernandez said.

But Senior Insp. Alfredo Miguel, investigation chief of the Tarlac police, said "we still cannot tell whether the suspect was a sniper because a gun fired only a few feet from a victim would not show powder burns."

Miguel said he had ordered crime laboratory experts and investigators to establish the circumstances behind the killing.

Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Philippine National Police spokesperson, said: "We condemn this killing, regardless of his [Ladera's] political leanings."

Rising tension

"We will pursue this case. We will investigate to give justice to Ladera and his family," he said.

"Whoever did this [killing] only succeeded in escalating the tension inside Hacienda Luisita," Miguel said.

Ladera, of Barangay Balete in Hacienda Luisita, was a supporter of the striking Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) and the United Luisita Workers Union (Ulwu).

In an interview with the INQUIRER on Wednesday, Ladera said that resolving the conflict would take some time because management did not want to settle matters. "But members of Ulwu and Catlu are prepared to confront that situation," he said in Filipino.

The official had earlier sponsored resolutions in the city council calling for a congressional review of the stock distribution option at the sugar plantation, among other issues.

Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, the former President's son, also denounced the killing of Ladera, saying it would only escalate the tension in Tarlac at a time when his family was trying its best to resolve the labor row and provide help to the affected workers and their families.

Dialogue

"Although he was a leftist, he was willing to talk. He shouldn't have been killed," Aquino said. "Even though we had differences, he believed in dialogue rather than in taking up arms to achieve their goals."

Ocampo said Ladera was with leaders of Ulwu and Catlu when they met with former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. on Nov. 16, 2004, a day before the striking workers were dispersed violently.

"Because of our sympathies for the striking hacienda workers, Ladera and I became targets of black propaganda. Ladera was alleged to be New People's Army spokesperson Gregorio Rosal's nephew and therefore had connections with the NPA," the lawmaker said.

"I was accused of whitewashing the hacienda massacre that was alleged to be a communist plot," he added.

"We have no other suspects but the military. Who else would do it?" said Robert de Castro, deputy secretary general of Bayan Muna.

'Agitator?'

De Castro noted that Nolcom officials had earlier tagged Ladera as an agitator of the workers.

In a statement, the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said "the Nolcom and the Cojuangcos are the ones who would definitely benefit with the death and silencing of the good councilor because he always stood for the rights of the workers in the hacienda."

"Is not the blood of their massacre victims enough that now they are silencing even their [farmers'] supporters? There is indeed a reign of terror by the military in the hacienda and it is instigated by the Cojuangco-Aquino clans to break the will of the strikers," KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos said in a statement.

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano blamed the Army's 69th Infantry Battalion for the killing of Ladera, whom he described as "a courageous public servant who even testified in behalf of the striking workers in the House of Representatives."

"They [the killers] think they are dousing water on the passions of our workers to protect their rights, but this would only inflame the workers' anger," Mariano said. "This is like tossing gasoline into a conflagration."

Nolcom reacts

Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, Nolcom head, said he would not be surprised if militant groups and critics implicated the military in the murder.

"With the colorful life of the late Abel [Ladera], the inclusion of the military in a varied list of suspects in the killing is not surprising. But to these scenario writers, we say: Be reminded that this is not the way your military operates," Dominguez said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER's Central Luzon Desk.

The command, he said, had no record of involvement in summary killings "despite efforts of the enemies of [the] state to paint a different picture of the soldiers. Nolcom soldiers are professional soldiers, they will not resort to human rights violation."

Dominguez said military officials "will not tolerate the wrongdoings of any personnel under this command."

"The current leadership is proud of this fact and we don't intend to tarnish this image," he said.

No media spectacle, please

"Let's all help to keep this unfortunate incident from turning into a media spectacle as we assure the public that your military shall cooperate with concerned investigative bodies," he said in appealing for sobriety.

Lt. Col. Preme Monta, Nolcom spokesperson, said "we are not barbaric to resort to this kind of activity. If they have evidence against 69th IB, we will cooperate with the investigation." *With reports from Jo Martinez-Clemente, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Luige A. del Puerto, Philip C. Tubeza and Blanche S. Rivera in Manila*

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ninoyaquino.com for sale on eBay

From page A1

noyaquino.com posted at http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&?ViewItem&item=5755677255 reads:

"This domain name is that of Ninoy Aquino who was assasinated (sic) in 1983 for trying to start a peaceful revolt against then dictator Ferdinand Marcos. It has been rumored that Imelda Marcos was behind the assasination (sic) nevertheless, his murder on the tarmac of the Manila International airport started the first ever democratic peaceful revolution which catapulted his wife Corazon Aquino to the Philippine presidency.

'I need the money'

"It is unfortunate that I have to sell my rights to the domain name, but frankly, I need the money. I know that a LOT of people may have interest in it including his wife the ex-President, Cory Aquino and his daughter Kris Aquino who is a top Asian (sic) actress.

"This domain will be legally transferred on May 1, 2005. I also own ninoyaquino.net and will transfer that domain at no charge at the same time to the winning bidder."

Owner Diane Cross

A WHOIS search on both ninoyaquino.com and ninoyaquino.net revealed the owner to be Michigan-based Diane Cross. Cross agreed to be interviewed after being e-mailed and reached through the eBay "Ask seller a question" function by INQ7.net.

While Cross also owns the ninoyaquino.org domain, it is interesting to note that ninoyaquino.info is registered to a Filipino—Emmanuel Lopez of the Los Angeles-based E-Business Inc.-Radio Ng Bayan. It is also a live site, being the alternate URL of PhilCentral.com, which lays claim to being the "World's No. 1 Filipino Web Portal."

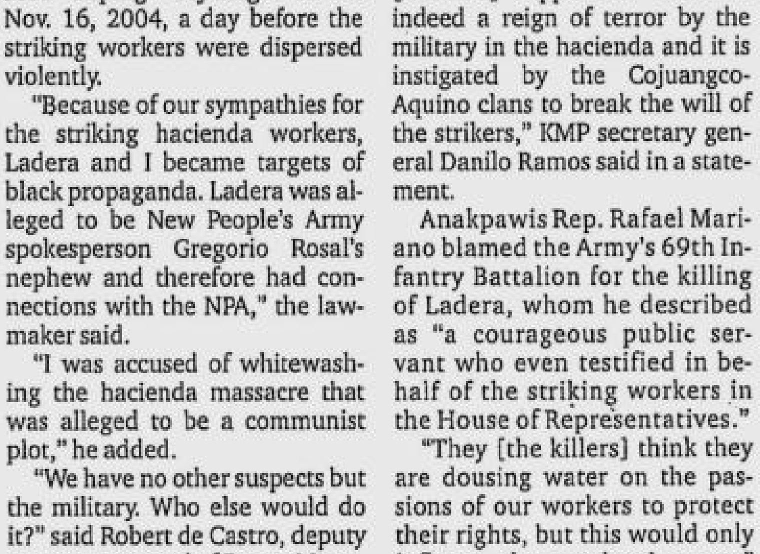
Cross told INQ7.net that she is in her 40s and works as a secretary. "I am a single parent with a daughter in nursing school and a son," she said.

Why did Cross decide to buy the Ninoy Aquino domain names, and why did she pick this Filipino hero?

"I bought this site because I believe in the domain name industry. My interest started when the domain name www.business.com sold for $4 million," Cross said. (Business.com was actually sold to Santa Monica-based eCompanies for more than that, fetching $7.5 million in 1999, less than three years after seller Marc Ostrofsky bought it for a reported $150,000 from a London Internet service provider).

Cross said she did not expect to get as lucky as Ostrofsky. Even so, she started to purchase some domain names, like www.saintmotherteresa.net, www.soupkitchens.us, and www.ilovejews.com.

"I usually pick the dot com's first because a com usually has more domain housing name value than a



dot org, a dot net, a dot us or even a dot tv," she explained.

Like a shot around the world

Cross said she bought the Ninoy Aquino domain names because she considered the former Philippine senator a modern martyr and worldwide hero whose murder was heard like a shot around the world.

"I search the Web a lot and I found a lot of tribute pages, which is how I learned he was a real great man, but then he has no domain name. That's why I bought it," Cross told INQ7.net.

Cross pointed out that many people still seemed to be unaware of the profitability of the domain name industry.

She noted that the domain name rock.com fetched more than a million dollars, while monte.com was offered for an opening bid of $15,000 on eBay by another seller. Incidentally, the monte.com auction is still ongoing at http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&category=11153&item=5754326539, ending on March 5.

Reads PDI

According to Cross, she reads the INQUIRER online almost daily. "I read this because of my Filipino friends … I like Filipino humor a lot and I even enjoy the latest stuff on Kris Aquino, who I learned is the daughter of Ninoy."

Cross said she first heard about Ninoy Aquino on CNN when he was gunned down on Aug. 21, 1983. "My Filipino friends here were talking about it like he was a big deal. I found out that he was, in fact, a big deal."

Then came People Power three years later. "And it was all started by one remarkable man who didn't fire a gun at anyone. That's why I think he's great … He won freedom for his people," she said.

Cross said that she also intended to give the domain names ninoyaquino.net and ninoyaquino.org to whoever would place the winning bid for ninoyaquino.com.

Philippine vacation

She said she decided to sell the Ninoy Aquino domain names because she needed the money. "As a single parent, there is never enough money and I live from paycheck to paycheck … I also want to help a very good friend who needs some medical attention."

Anything extra she earns from the sale, she would spend on a vacation in the Philippines.

Isn't she worried that some people might react negatively to putting up for bidding domain names associated with a hero?

Strictly business

"This is strictly business. I was fortunate and amazed to find out this site was available. I just think any site like this should be developed to pay tribute to someone," Cross said.

Interested in owning ninoyaquino.com? Better head on to eBay—it might soon be going, going, gone.

(E-mail the author at joeyalarilla@gmail.com and visit his blog at www.alarilla.com.)

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VP to hold monthly meets with shelter agencies

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE President Noli De Castro yesterday approved a monthly meeting with all heads of key shelter agencies as well as the major players in the housing business in order to effectively implement the government's housing program.

De Castro, chair of Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, made the commitment after meeting with representatives from the Philippines Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and Subdivision and Housing Development Association (SHDA) in the HUDCC office in Makati City.

He said there was a need to promote better linkages with the private sector in order to identify problem areas in housing projects.

The PCCI/SHDA earlier proposed the holding of regular meetings with HUDCC and key shelter agencies in line with their plan to launch the holding of "one-stop-shops" for housing projects.

In their meeting, Eric Cruz, PCCI vice president for construction and housing division, said the housing projects would be implemented faster and easier through "one-stop-shops" which the HUDCC hoped to promote.

De Castro stressed that socialized housing was his priority and urged those present in the meeting to also do the same.

Bonoan; 69

RICARDO C. Bonoan, a businessman of New Manila, Quezon City, died last Monday at the age of 69.

He is survived by his wife Tita, children Reret, Mikie, Jane, Sugar and Joy, mother Vicenta and siblings Toning and Baby, Gerry and Tita.

The body lies at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine in New Manila. A requiem Mass will be said on Saturday, March 5, at 9:30 a.m., after which the body will be cremated at Funeraria Paz, Quezon City.

Liposuction not just for vanity, says DOH chief

By Christian V. Esguerra

IF YOU think liposuction is all vanity, think again.

A recent survey by the Philippine Medical Association showed 80 percent of women who went through the procedure did so because of work, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said yesterday.

These women, he said, wanted to go abroad to work in the entertainment, hotel or tourism industry where a nice body is ostensibly a factor.

Only 20 percent availed of the expensive procedure out of sheer vanity, Dayrit said, quoting PMA president Dr. Bu Castro.

"It's a way of trying to make themselves physically competitive, so someone can argue that it's a survival issue," Dayrit told reporters in a press conference.

But with already two deaths resulting from liposuction reported to the PMA, the government is looking to regulate—if it can even do so—the cosmetic technique popular among local celebrities.

"As of the moment, we're studying the facts and we're working with the PMA. We'll see what needs to [be done]," Dayrit said.

At present, he admitted that there's a problem with jurisdiction.

Unlike in hospitals, the Department of Health cannot just regulate clinics offering liposuction because they fall under local governments that provide them with business permits, he explained.

"The DOH cannot just go in and say 'you're all closed,'" he said. "What the DOH does is it gives licenses for hospitals. So if they're not hospitals, the DOH has no regulatory jurisdiction over them."

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Unpopular HK leader has quit, reports say

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, whose unpopular leadership led to pro-democracy protests in the city, has resigned, sources close to the government and Beijing said on Wednesday.

A source close to Hong Kong's government, who declined to be identified, said that Chinese leaders in Beijing accepted Tung's resignation last Saturday.

Tung's move comes just weeks after he was publicly reprimanded by Chinese President Hu Jintao for poor performance over the past seven years.

Another source close to Beijing said that Chinese leaders had already agreed to Tung stepping down but he would only formally resign after being made vice chair of a top advisory body to China's parliament, a promotion Tung is almost certain to get over the next 10 days.

Citing unidentified sources, Hong Kong newspapers reported Tung's right hand man, Chief Secretary Donald Tsang, would be made acting chief executive after Tung steps down.

But asked to confirm if Tung had stepped down, a government spokesperson said: "We don't comment on speculation."

Tung also kept people guessing. "I know you are concerned about many questions. I will reply at an appropriate time," he said after arriving in Beijing for a meeting of the Chinese parliament's top advisory body.

The Standard newspaper said Tung handed in his resignation before the Chinese New Year, which started on Feb. 9, adding it was accepted after an emergency meeting of the politburo.

Tung, 67, told top Chinese officials that his health had been deteriorating, the newspaper said.

Rumors of his departure have swirled since Tung was made a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on Monday, which analysts saw as a precursor to being elevated to vice chair of the body.

Such a promotion would pave the way for a graceful exit for Tung and save face for Beijing, which has often had to defend the increasingly unpopular leader handpicked by the mainland's leadership, analysts said.

Tung, a businessman with little political experience, was chosen by Beijing to be Hong Kong's first chief executive after Britain returned the colony to Chinese rule in 1997.

But the former shipping tycoon's tenure has been stormy, marked by major policy gaffes, resignations and scandals involving key lieutenants and three recessions.

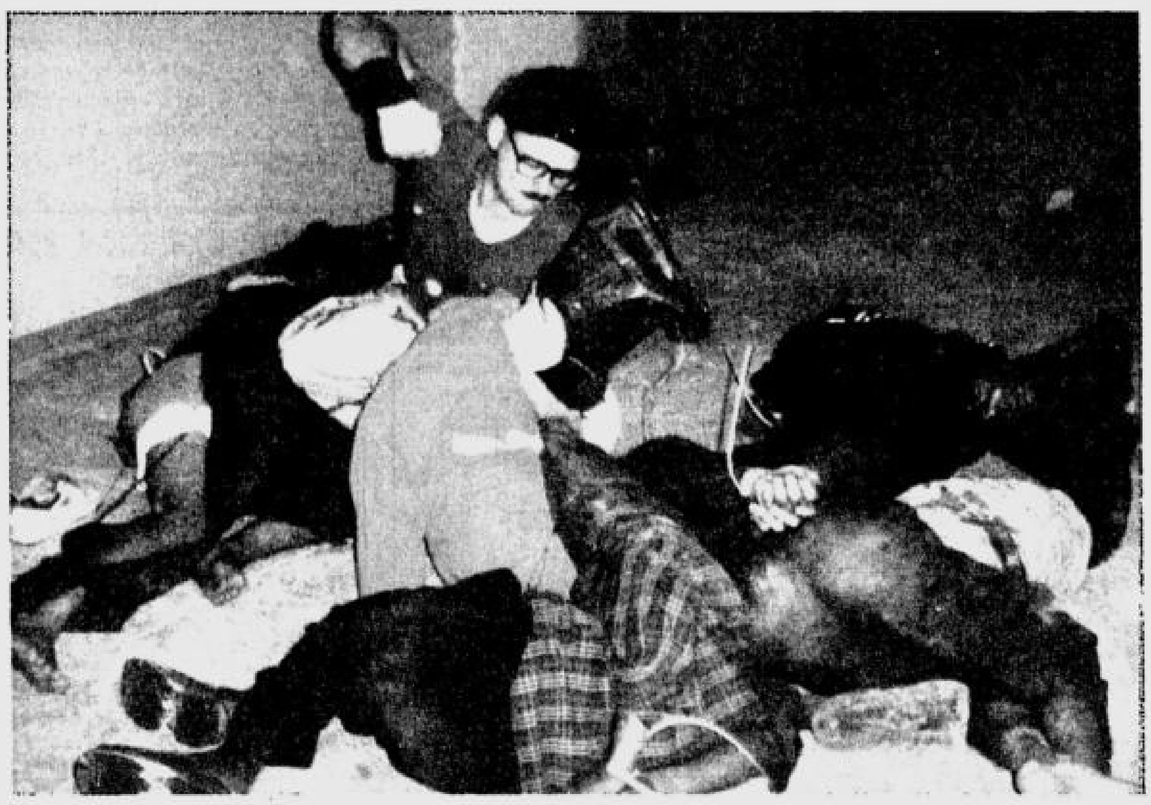
Widespread anger with Tung's leadership spurred growing calls for full voting rights and massive street protests, alarming communist Beijing, who feared it could lose control of the city.

But calls for more democracy have eased since last April, when Beijing flatly rejected universal suffrage for the territory for at least the next few years. A recent protest drew only a few thousand people compared with half million who took to the streets for rallies in 2003 and 2004.

Democrats who have long called for Tung to quit had mixed feelings about the news of the resignation, speculating that it could be a ploy by Beijing to tighten its grip on the city that was promised a high degree of autonomy when it returned to Chinese rule.

It is not clear if any replacement would merely serve out the rest of Tung's term, which ends in mid-2007, or be confirmed by a Beijing-backed electoral college to take charge for a full five-year term.

Some political analysts say the latter is likely and that Beijing may have crafted the timing of Tung's departure and the ascendance of Tsang, who is well liked, to stave off demands from the pro-democracy camp to participate in the electoral process. *Reuters*



UNDATED photo obtained May 21, 2004 by the Washington Post shows a US soldier with his right arm and fist cocked, appearing prepared to strike one detainee in a pile of detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison, outside Baghdad. China March 3 accused the US of serious human rights violations and told Washington to clean up its own act before "wantonly trampling on the sovereignty of other countries." AFP

TIT FOR TAT

China slams US rights record

BEIJING—China fired back Thursday at US criticism of its human rights record, issuing a report that denounced the United States for offenses ranging from allowing crime and poverty at home to abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The report—issued annually in response to the US state department's global human rights survey—accused the American military of committing "wanton slaughters," killing thousands of foreign civilians and torturing detainees.

"The atrocity of US troops abusing Iraqi POWs exposed the infringement of human rights of foreign nationals by the United States," said the report, released by the press office of China's Cabinet.

The US state department report released Monday accused China's Communist government of persecuting dissidents and religious activists, and said prison inmates were tortured and mistreated.

Washington is likely to again seek censure of China next month at the annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Past such motions to censure have been killed by China's allies on the commission.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Liu Jianchao said the State Council report was "an alarm bell to get the United States to be alert to its own problems."

"The United States opted for this confrontational approach and China has to make a response," he said. "The United States should take this seriously."

The Chinese report accused the United States of hypocrisy in condemning conditions in foreign nations while staying silent on its own.

"In 2004, the atrocity of US troops abusing Iraqi POWs exposed the dark side of human rights performance of the United States. The scandal shocked the humanity and was condemned by the international community," the report said.

"It is quite ironic that on Feb. 28 of this year, the state department of the United States once again posed as the 'world human rights police,'" it said. *AP*

Saddam's son was poised to topple dad, says Arnett

LOS ANGELES—The eldest son of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was plotting to overthrow his father just as US troops advanced on Baghdad in March 2003, journalist Peter Arnett claimed in Playboy Magazine.

Uday Hussein, known for his ruthlessness and flashy lifestyle, had won the support of the leadership of his father's Fedayeen militia to overthrow Saddam's 35-year rule, according to an advance copy of the April edition of Playboy obtained by AFP.

The controversial reporter, who was fired by the US NBC television network in 2003 after suggesting that the US war plan in Iraq had failed, made the claim following an 18-month investigation in which he says he gained access to Uday Hussein's inner circle.

The article cited a letter from Saddam Fedayeen commander Gen. Maki Humudat, dated March 26, 2003, in which he swore allegiance to a new Iraqi government under the control of Fedayeen chief Uday Hussein.

"According to your direction and command to form a new government under the leadership of your Excellency (Uday), we have informed all the senior officers of the Saddam Fedayeen of your desire to appoint them as your candidates for office in your government," the letter said.

Uday had planned to announce his seizure of the crumbling reins of power later the same day, but was thwarted when US jets bombed his Youth TV studios in Baghdad, according to Arnett.

The ambitious heir had even formed a shadow government on the outskirts of Iraq's capital, Baghdad that was disguised under the cover of his powerful Olympic committee and funded by murky oil deals, he said.

According to Arnett, the oldest son of the Iraqi dictator had long been chafing under his father's iron fisted rule and blamed his father for the punishing international sanctions on the country. *AFP*

Baghdad car bombs kill 5

BAGHDAD—Two car bombs exploded near Iraq's interior ministry in Baghdad on Thursday, killing at least five policemen and wounding several in violence that threatened to overshadow efforts to form a new government.

A police source said the car bombs exploded just outside the heavily guarded ministry in central Baghdad, part of a relentless guerrilla campaign to stall the formation of the new government expected to be named in the next few weeks.

Iraqi politicians are engaged in protracted horse trading to fill top posts in the government, creating a new political landscape that has raised concern over sectarian tensions.

A Shiite alliance won a slim majority in the Jan. 30 polls, gaining power after decades of Sunni domination under Saddam Hussein. The alliance has chosen Islamist Ibrahim al-Jaafari as its candidate for prime minister. But interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is bidding to keep his job.

The Kurds, who came second in the elections, are in a powerful negotiating position and are seen as kingmakers.

The new government will face the daunting task of tightening security against further attacks by mainly Sunni insurgents angered over losing the privileges they enjoyed under Saddam.

Many Sunni Arabs boycotted the polls or were too afraid to vote, and the 20 percent Sunni Arab minority has little representation in Iraq's new parliament.

Iraqi officials had hoped the elections would help ease violence. But guerrillas have kept up suicide and car bombings in a campaign to topple the US-backed interim government. *Reuters*

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Bashir draws 2 1/2 years after terrorism trial

BASHIR listening to judges' verdict March 3. AP

JAKARTA—Indonesian Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, accused of leading an al-Qaida-linked group blamed for bombings across Asia, was jailed for two-and-a-half-years Thursday at the end of his second terrorism trial.

Bashir was cleared of terrorism allegations but was jailed by a five-member panel of judges after being found guilty of involvement in a "sinister conspiracy" that led to the 2002 Bali bombings which killed 202 people.

"The panel of judges decided that the defendant, Abu Bakar Bashir, has been legally and convincingly proven of engaging in a sinister conspiracy that led to fire and the death of others," Chief Judge Sudarto said.

The judges said that his words to key Bali bomber Amrozi and Hutomo Pamungkas during a meeting in Solo, Central Java, in 2002 had constituted the conspiracy.

Bashir had told them "I leave it up to you" when he was notified by Amrozi that he and his friends were planning "a program" in Bali.

The verdict was greeted by yells of "Allahu Akbar (God is greatest)" by his followers both inside and outside the court. The judges were immediately whisked out of the room by armed police.

More than 800 police were deployed around the agriculture ministry complex in south Jakarta where the trial was being held. It is the second time the man accused of leading the Jemaah Islamiyah group has faced terrorism charges.

The white-bearded Bashir, 66, looked frail in court dressed in his traditional white robe and shawl, a white skullcap and glasses.

Prosecutors had demanded an eight-year prison sentence for Bashir for failing to prevent Jeemaah Islamiyah members from carrying out terror attacks.

The main charge that Bashir and his supporters planned the Bali bombings and the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in 2003 had been dropped for lack of evidence.

Prosecutors in their indictment said that as Jemaah Islamiyah chief, Bashir visited one of its training camps in the Philippines in 2000 and allegedly relayed a "ruling from Osama bin Laden which permitted attacks and killings of Americans and their allies."

Indonesia has come under pressure from the United States and Australia to act against Bashir, and the trial has heard evidence that Indonesia was asked to hand him over to the US authorities.

Shortly before Thursday's court session, Bashir said that if he was found guilty it would be a "tyrannical verdict," but he appealed to his followers not to react with violence if he was convicted.

"If Allah decides to free me, then we should not be overly happy but if Allah decides that I remain in detention, if the judges do not free me, we should also not react excessively," Bashir said.

Bashir maintained that US President George W. Bush, "the enemy of Allah," has pressured Indonesia to jail him to stop him campaigning for Islamic law.

Inside the auditorium around 100 Bashir supporters packed the public gallery. Around 400 Bashir supporters and dozens of members of the hardline Front for the Defenders of Islam group gathered outside the court.

Bashir was arrested a week after the October 2002 Bali bombings and was first put on trial the following year.

Prosecutors failed to prove that he waged a terror campaign to topple the government and led Jemaah Islamiyah, which is committed to setting up a pan-Islamic state across Southeast Asia.

However judges found him guilty of immigration offences and he was jailed.

Police rearrested him in April last year as he left prison after serving the immigration sentence, citing new evidence of terrorist links and of his Jemaah Islamiyah leadership. *AFP*

Pope could live for years with rest, doctors say

ROME—Pope John Paul could live for a few more years so long as he takes time to recover from his latest health scare and cuts back on future commitments, medical experts said on Wednesday.

The 84-year-old Pope and his doctors face potentially difficult decisions in the days and weeks ahead following throat surgery last Thursday to help the Pontiff breathe, but there is no reason why he should not regain much of his former strength.

"If he is allowed to rest and recuperate, then what reason is there for him to die at this moment? None," said Prof. Gianni Pezzoli, director of the Italian Parkinson's Association.

"The Pope is a patient who could still live for some years, albeit always growing slightly weaker," he said.

The Pope, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, was rushed to hospital twice last month with acute breathing problems, forcing doctors to perform a tracheotomy—inserting a tube into his windpipe to let air flow freely into his lungs.

Concerns he might develop potentially deadly pneumonia have subsided and the Vatican says he is making a good recovery, regaining the use of his voice and eating regularly.

The two immediate questions facing his medical team are when to remove the tracheotomy tube and when to let him return home.

Prof. Roberto Filipo, an ear, nose and throat specialist at Rome's Sapienza University, thought his doctors would be eager to take out the tube as soon as possible.

"The tracheotomy tube provides short term relief, but can cause complications over a longer period because it heightens the risk of infections," he said.

However, other specialists said leaving the tube in place for a few more weeks would allow doctors to keep his lungs clean and give them emergency access should his breathing fail again.

Parkinson's patients suffer from weakened muscles which means it is hard to cough, and therefore hard for them to clear mucous from their lungs, and hard to swallow, which means food can fall into the windpipe and infect the lungs.

"If he were my patient, I would leave it in," said Doctor Sotirios Kassapedis, pulmonary critical care specialist at Long Island Care Center in the United States. *Reuters*

Cholesterol drug Crestor could pose risks for Asians

WASHINGTON—The cholesterol drug Crestor is being relabeled to add a caution that starter doses should be reduced in Asian-Americans and some other patients.

The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday that Crestor, like other drugs in the category known as statins, can have a rare side effect of serious muscle damage.

A clinical trial found that levels of Crestor in Asian patients were double those of Caucasians taking the same dose, increasing the chance of muscle damage.

The new label urges physicians to start Asian patients, those with severe kidney disease and patients taking cyclosporine at the lowest dose level.

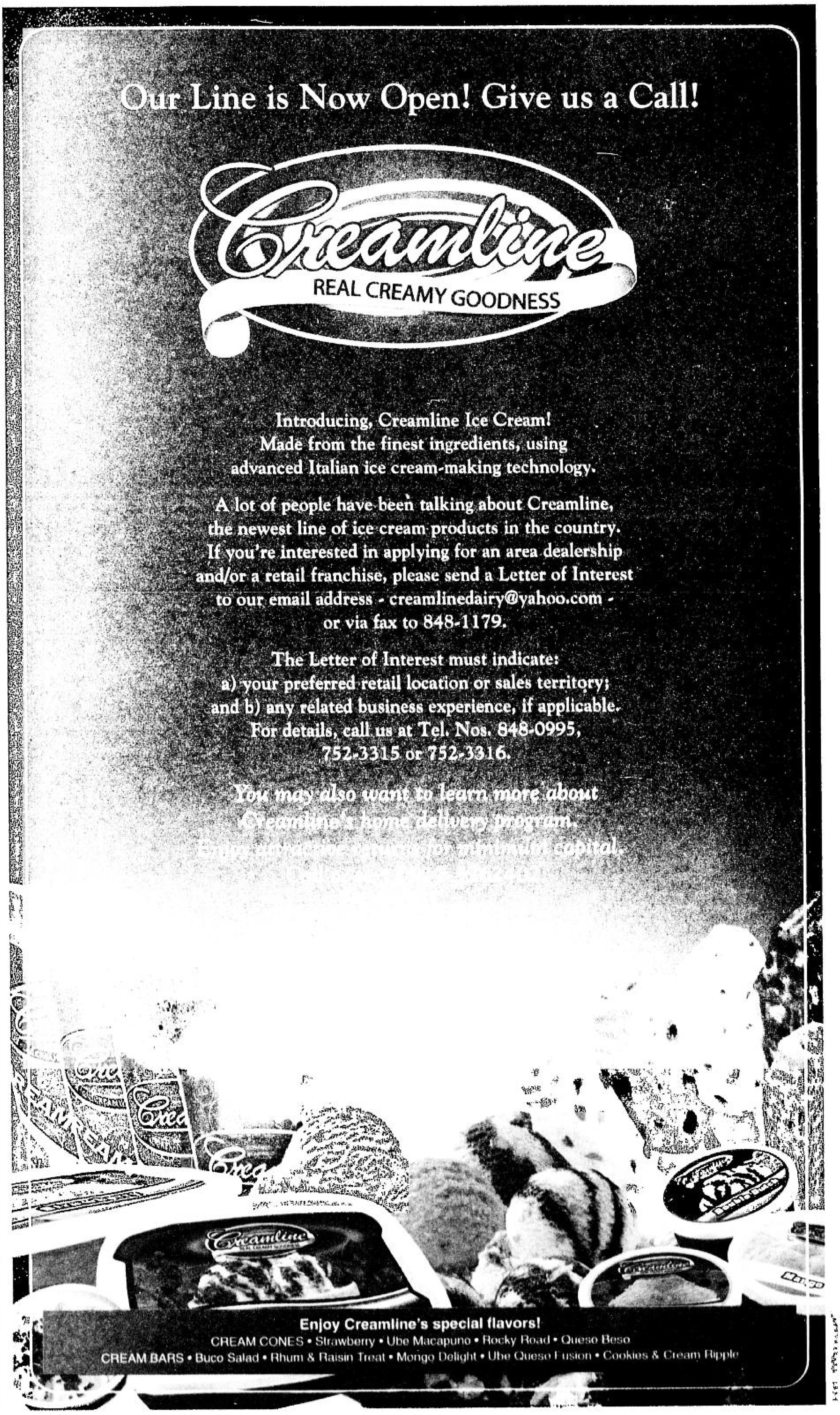
The lowest available dose would be 5 mg, compared with a maximum dose of 40 mg.

The cholesterol-lowering drug has been prescribed to more than 4.3 million patients, according to manufacturer AstraZeneca.

"We continue to believe Crestor is safe and effective when used according to the prescribing information," said David Brennan, AstraZeneca president.

Dr. Steven Galson, acting director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, said the "advisory on Crestor is part of an ongoing effort to notify the public of potentially significant emerging safety data so that they can make more informed choices about their medical care."

Crestor has drawn some criticism for the reported muscle damage, but the FDA statement said a review of available data indicates the risk from Crestor is no higher than that from other statin drugs. *AP*



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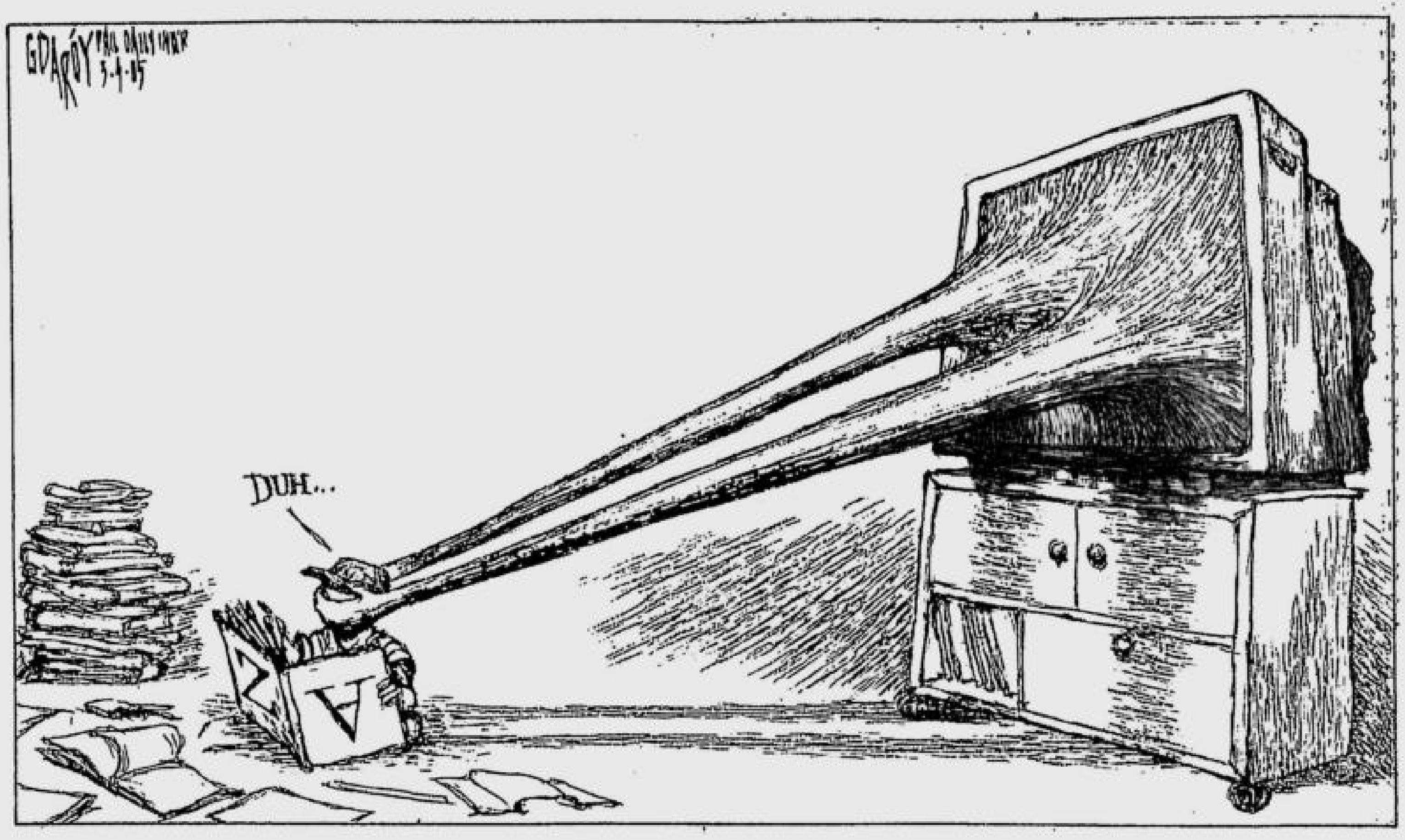


In harm's way

EDITORIAL

MALAYSIA'S Home Minister Azmi Khalid has said: "Compared to Guantanamo Bay, we are a five-star hotel. We do not do things that are inhumane. This is our guarantee."

He was referring to the massive crackdown recently launched by the Malaysian government against illegal foreign workers. While the raids have mostly been aimed against Indonesian workers, more than 200 Filipinos have also been rounded up.

The crackdown, coming after a well-publicized four-month amnesty period, would be less controversial if it didn't involve punishment dating to the British colonial period: caning. It is punishment by caning, in particular, that has sparked an international outcry against the Malaysian government. The concern felt by international human rights groups has been echoed by foreign governments.

Indonesia and the Philippines, in particular, have had diplomatic tussles with Malaysia over the subject of workers' migration. Malaysia's crackdown in Sabah, in particular, threatened to revive decades-old animosities between Manila and Kuala Lumpur over that contested territory. Jakarta, too, has had repeated high-level ministerial meetings with its counterparts in Malaysia to discuss this difficult issue.

The truth is, Malaysia needs foreign workers badly, as many Malaysians refuse to take on low-paying jobs. Neighboring countries, from the Philippines and Indonesia to Burma and Bangladesh and even India, have millions of unemployed workers willing to do those jobs.

The Malaysian government, however, has a longstanding policy of stringently applying its laws. It never hesitates to apply its police power to the fullest. As Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said, illegal workers who remained in Malaysia have had their last chance. "We do not need to hear pleas, it doesn't matter anymore. They chose to remain defiant, they have to face the music."

The Malaysian government can argue that it has postponed the recent round of expulsions four times, and that it has every right to impose what it calls its revolving door policy: limited contractual periods for workers who must return to their countries of origin in between stints. For workers from places like Indonesia and the Philippines, expulsion, while harsh, probably doesn't mean death. For workers from Burma, however, there is the chance that workers sent back may face harsh punishment from their own government.

The strength of the Malaysian position is that for every illegal worker expelled, there are probably dozens, if not hundreds willing to take their place, according to the strict regulations imposed by Malaysian authorities. The best that the countries of aggrieved illegal workers can do, is what they are now doing: call on the Malaysian government to treat illegal workers humanely.

Since the retirement of the feisty former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia has shown itself far more willing to dialogue with its neighbors. It has been responding reasonably to foreign criticisms. However, old habits die hard, and there is no older habit than the relish with which Malaysian officials wield their police powers.

Aside from Singapore, no other Asean country condones caning as an acceptable form of punishment. This indicates that Asean can push for a consensus when it comes to the treatment of foreign nationals. Under no circumstance can caning be deemed acceptable for citizens of nations that themselves reject caning as a punishment for their own citizens. The least Malaysia can do is to give way in this regard.

The Philippine government, on the other hand, has to cooperate with Malaysia in policing migrants so that Filipinos bound for Malaysia do so with legitimate work permits and papers. Opportunities remain in that country, and no earthly power can stop desperate Filipinos from seeking employment there. What the country has an obligation to do is to ensure that no Filipino puts himself in harm's way. Failure to do so ensures, in the end, that what is a Malaysian problem becomes a Philippine problem.

It's fall, spring and summer in RP all at once

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

IT is early spring in the temperate regions, but in tropical Philippines it is spring, summer and fall all at the same time. Aren't we blessed for that?

Look around you. The big, broad, rounded, shiny leaves of the talisay trees are turning yellow, orange, red, purple and rust, then fall off like trees do in autumn. Some santol leaves, also big and broad, also turn red, but the tree doesn't shed all its leaves like the talisay. On the other hand, the mahogany sheds all its leaves, littering the ground below with brown leaves that are blown about by the wind. To a lesser extent, the narra and acacia trees also drop their leaves. Afterwards, the trees all stand naked with their bare branches pointing to the sky, exposing the birds' nests and the nests of the big red ants called *hantik* in the higher branches, as though it is wintertime.

After several days, the bare branches and twigs will burst with tiny buds as trees do in spring. Those of the mahogany are purplish-brown, all the others are light green. As the buds unfurl into tiny leaves, waving merrily in the wind like so many tiny buntings, the trees attain a light green tinge and, as the days wear on, progressively turn darker green. The tamarind trees also unfurl light green leaves that June bugs find irresistible, just like the humans who gather them for *sinigang* and *sinampalukang manok*. In May and June, the light green color is dotted with black shapes. They are called June bugs, though they are not really bugs but beetles.

Often you will see trees standing side by side doing all these at the same time. One tree would have all its leaves intact while beside it another starts shedding leaves. Still another would be fully bare, with the dead leaves surrounding the ground around it, while a fourth would be sprouting buds and a fifth beside them spreading out light green leaves.

Next time you pass Quezon Avenue in Quezon City, take the opportunity to watch nature changing seasons as the mahogany trees, all in a row beside the street, shedding, sprouting and growing leaves at the same time beside one another, as though they cannot decide whether it's fall, winter or spring.

At the same time, some trees, shrubs and vines burst out with blossoms ahead of the others. The first to bloom is the lowly *kakawati*, which is already in full bloom with profuse pink blossoms that rival the more famous cherry blossoms of Japan. Next are the hot-hued bougainvilleas that adorn fences, hedges and trees with their red, orange, purple and white flowers, single-petaled or multi-petaled, signaling that summer is really here, what with the heat beginning to soar and Holy Week only a couple of weeks away.

The *kalachuchi* hangs out not only red, pink, yellow and white blossoms, but also spreads its perfume in the air. Walk under a *kalachuchi* tree and you can smell its fragrant breath.

Soon, as the heat of summer reaches its peak, it will be the turn of the regal fire tree to take center stage with its red orange blossoms putting its wide-spreading crown on fire. Those passing through Quezon City, especially in and around the Diliman campus of the University of the Philippines, and the two nearby parks, Quezon Memorial and the Ninoy Aquino Park, will soon see this red-hot summer show.

If you happen to drive by Laguna Lake on the Rizal side, look out for an island on fire in the middle of the lake. This is Cielito Lindo, the love island of the late Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Bello who owned it. The couple planted many fire trees on it and in summer, when they bloom, the island is a red spot, looking even from afar as though it is on fire.

* * *

In the last two columns, I argued that instead of cutting down our forests, we should preserve them for tourism as other countries like America, Canada and Japan do.

Decades ago, the New Englanders planted deciduous trees on their hills and mountains and farms. The leaves of these trees turn into a riot of colors before falling in autumn. Now these trees attract hordes of tourists every autumn who tramp all over the New England states just to gawk at the colorful foliage and leave a lot of money to the hotels, inns, cottages, restaurants, gift shops, resorts and their employees.

Since we can't have many trees with leaves that turn into many colors in autumn, what if we plant trees that bear colorful blossoms instead on denuded mountains? After several years, they would be tourist attractions, and instead of foliage tours, we would have our own flower tours.

The trouble with our present reforestation efforts is that we plant fruit trees like mango and *kasoy* or hardwood trees with high-priced timber like narra and mahogany. But they don't grow to harvestable size until 20 years or more. For 20 years or more, the tree farmer has no income from his trees. So why don't we intersperse with them softwood trees that grow faster and can be harvested earlier and at the same time bear colorful blossoms? The leguminous trees like acacia, fire tree, giant *ipil-ipil* and *kakawati* are fast-growing softwood that can be harvested after five years. They are good enough for woodcraft, furniture, charcoal and firewood. The farmer, therefore, will have a steady income while waiting for the high-priced hardwoods to mature. What's more, their leaves are rich in nitrogen and make good fertilizer, and they are self-propagating.

Imagine if we had whole mountainsides and hills full of blooming *kakawati* and fire trees. Won't they attract eco-tourists?

Suffer the children

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

FOR more than a year already, several bright students from the UP College of Law have spent hands-on internships to help children behind bars and child victims of abuse. With support mainly from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Manila and as part of their Child's Rights clinical course, these students have visited jails in Quezon City, Pasig, Malabon and Navotas. They have appeared in court and successfully secured the release of minors held in cells together with adult offenders (the law requires separate quarters) or otherwise held in squalor. They have assisted child victims of rape and sexual molestation.

This week, another group of students, consisting of the Class of 2007-B, are presenting a photo exhibit of the work of Nana Buxani, who captured compelling shots of the conditions of what legalese calls "children in conflict with the law" or CICLs. The photos at the Malcolm Hall lobby promote the showing of "Bunso," a documentary about three boys detained in an adult prison in the Visayas, and filmed by Ditsi Carolino and Ms Buxani.

I have attended some post-internship sessions and read the students' reports and reflections. Francesco Britanico, a third year law student, described conditions in the Malabon jail: "Conditions are squalid ... ventilation inadequate ... the heat oppressive. Quarters built for less than 200 are made to house 500 ... Just to fit inside ... the detainees had to spend all day seated in rows with their legs folded. There was literally not even enough room for them to stretch their legs." (It is worse in Quezon City, whose jail was built for 700 but holds 3,000.)

Erica Encabo, fourth year, reported that in Navotas, there was a separate cell exclusively for minors. Her ward got two meals a day, and was allowed a daily bath (though he had to pass through the adult offenders' cell to get to the showers), but he had been wearing the same clothes he had from the time he was arrested, and had not been visited by anyone since. He slept usually under a bed, space being so limited and because the dominant groups occupy the bunk beds.

Realizing, too, that the kids got to breathe fresh air only during "conference" with "counsels," the law students arranged their schedules to "confer" more often with their wards. The students would even bring food, toiletries and allergy medicines, which they paid with their own *baon*.

It was also so refreshing to read a female student write—amid the legalese and gnawing pangs of conscience—that when she realized she was visiting a jail, "I kept wishing that I had worn sneakers instead of heels."

The students have a high batting average in getting their "wards" released, but also agonize: Aren't we just releasing these offenders back to the breeding grounds of crime? Karen Jimeno, fourth year student, asked: "If my Motion for Release on Recognizance is granted, [the child, a rugby sniffer] would have to return to his community and I am afraid that ... he might be influenced by his peers to use rugby again. He has only finished Grade 4 but ...desires to study again and finish high school."

It is an uphill battle to get the offenders released. (A Las Piñas clerk of court berated a student volunteer, saying that life is different from what they learned in their books, and that they shouldn't always insist on what the law provides.) Understandably, judges are hesitant to release the minors, having no doubt seen the record of repeat offenders and lack of institutions to care for them. Fortunately, the students have asked that the minors be released to an NGO, Peoples Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation Inc. (Preda), which provides shelters for these youthful offenders.

The volunteers are supervised by a team led by long-time professor of Persons and Family Relations, Elizabeth Aguiling-Pangalangan, and includes UP Office of Legal Aid Director Rowena Daroy-Morales, retired Family Court Judge Lilia Lopez, and June Ambrosio-Macaspac, a private prosecutor in the famous Romeo Jaloslos rape case.

Britanico closed his report by recognizing the "twin enormity and finiteness of one's responsibilities"—enormous, because these youthful offenders have no one else to turn to, and finite, because their problems stem from poverty, a problem that a law student intern is helpless to fix.

Other law students have served as volunteers with Sen. Jovito Salonga's Bantay Katarungan, or as interns in environmental law, human rights law, indigenous peoples' rights, and forthcoming from the UP Office of Legal Aid, an OFW Desk to assist migrant workers. OFWs are often victimized in real estate and investment scams, yet are otherwise ineligible for legal aid, which are accessible only to the dirt poor. Worse, OFW families bear the brunt of the social costs of migrant labor, and need help with family law questions.

I have told the student volunteers that perhaps they are the first normal people the youthful offenders have encountered in a long while. More than serving as the children's "lawyers," they can actually serve as role models and mentors to wayward youth. The volunteers have not shirked the challenges, despite the jarring introduction to bureaucratic indifference in the courts, and indeed some of them have said that they wish to pursue their children's rights advocacy after they become lawyers.

When we speak of the "duty to be a saint ... that doesn't mean doing strange things. It means a daily struggle in the interior life and in heroically fulfilling your duty right through the end."

* * *

Comments to raul.pangalangan@up.edu.ph

Implications of Senate shortcut on budget bill

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE SENATE approval on Tuesday of the 2005 budget bill marked a breakthrough in the congressional logjam that had bottled up the bill since last August and forced a return to the 2003 budget to prevent a paralysis of government operations. The issue that exercises Manila is what is behind the Senate's surprise decision, and the debate has revealed the information that the legislative pork barrel was at the root of the Senate's turnaround.

It is pointless to be distracted by the finger-pointing between the Senate and the House. What is more important is to point out the implications of the Senate's action.

The first implication is that the Senate's adoption of the administration-sponsored bill earlier passed by the House cut short the legislative process with the bypassing of the tedious and time-consuming final process, the bicameral conference; which would have held the budget bill hostage to further horse-trading between the two chambers over the pork barrel and between the executive and the legislative over the passage of the administration's urgent tax measures, particularly the amendments to the value added tax.

As Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who while being a member of the Senate majority cannot be considered a blind follower of the administration, has correctly pointed out, the bicameral committee, whose job is to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill, would have given the House members a last-ditch opportunity to restore the cut in their pork barrel allocation.

In the P907.56-billion budget bill approved by the Senate by a 20-0 vote, the pork barrel allocation of senators has been reduced to P120 million each, down from P200 million, and that of House members, to P40 million from P70 million. With the bypassing of the bicameral committee, the signing of the bill into law by the President has been speeded up.

The second implication is that the short-cut made by the Senate, through a coup engineered by Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate finance committee, removes the bill as the main obstacle in the legislative agenda and clears the way for the passage of the key measures in the eight-point tax package designed to reduce the fiscal deficit and debt. The move initiated by Villar to bypass the bicameral committee was vintage Villar, who became famous for springing the vote in the House to impeach former President Joseph Estrada and transmit to the Senate the impeachment charges laid against him.

Whether or not the senators were playing heroes at the expense of the House, the more important fact is that many senators, including opposition members, have expressed concern over the prolongation of the Senate-House stalemate and the uncertainties it created regarding the prospects of reducing the deficit and the recovery of the economy, given the slow pace of the deliberations on the tax reform bills. Those measures have been languishing in Congress since July when President Macapagal-Arrroyo began her regular term.

Support for the Senate shortcut unexpectedly came from Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who said: "The people are entitled to some stability in the financial operations for the government. We can no longer take for granted our fiscal position and budgetary needs. We must show our people we are a responsible Congress."

His concern was echoed by fellow opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara who described the Senate vote as "an act of statesmanship" for the country's stability, and Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. who said the senators had demonstrated that "we are committed to set our economic house in order."

Pimentel added: "This is the first priority legislation that we need to pass over and above all the tax measures that the President is now pushing this chamber to enact. This is an extraordinary act of the chamber in response to extraordinary demands of the times."

Their views expressed the concerns shared by the Senate majority. Senate President Franklin Drilon said the Senate "feels that the continued uncertainty arising from the failure to enact a new budget is not doing the country any good," adding that the "budget is the financial roadmap of the country and a reenacted budget does not augur well for the country."

It can't be said and there is no evidence that the opposition members knuckled under pressure from the President who only a few days ago scored Congress over the long delay in passing the budget bill.

The breakthrough in Congress was the signal being awaited by international investment and credit rating institutions to demonstrate the administration's capacity to get its legislative agenda through Congress and to secure the cooperation of the political opposition. During the past few months, international agencies have downgraded the country's credit ratings, citing the meager output of the administration in terms of key tax reform measures (so far, two out of eight). The budget is of particular interest to foreign investors because, first, it is the most important fiscal legislation, second, it contains provisions of showing the cost-cutting being done through the reduction of the pork barrel allocations, and third, its passage reflects the administration's political will and capacity to push politically unpopular legislation.

Although the cuts in the pork barrel allocations were not hefty and deep enough, they represented a response to criticisms from international financial and ratings institutions which have been watching for signs that the administration was complementing its tax measures with austerity measures.

Of racists and the courts

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TEN years ago, Filipino teachers at the International School of Manila began their struggle for justice. Though couched in crass material terms (they were demanding "parity" in wages with foreign faculty members either hired abroad or locally), they were actually fighting for their dignity, for their right, and the right of all Filipinos, to be viewed and treated as the equals of anyone in the world.

I'm not being overdramatic when I say the IS teachers were—are—in fact continuing the struggle waged by Rizal and the Propagandists who were motivated mainly by their desire to prove themselves the equals of the Spanish colonialists. In another era, and against a different colonizer, Filipinos waged other forms of struggle against racism, forcibly knocking down race-based barriers against membership in social clubs and leisure establishments.

One would think, more than a century after these nationalist struggles were waged, and decades after the success of the civil rights movement in the United States and the end of apartheid in South Africa, that there would no longer be room for racism anywhere, but especially in an educational institution. But to this day, Filipinos teaching in the International School are treated as "second-class citizens," deemed unworthy of receiving equal pay for equal work.

When news of the labor dispute between Filipino teachers and ISM management first leaked out, a columnist said he wanted to know what the locals were complaining about when their pay, even if it was the lowest among the "three-tier" salary levels, was still much higher than the average salary of their counterparts in local private and public schools.

"In other words," says Vida Dizon-Vergel, an officer of the International School Alliance of Educators (ISAE), "we were already in the bus, even if we were made to sit in the back. Why do we still want to sit up front?"

* * *

THERE is another, more serious aspect to the ISM controversy than "just" racism. There is the spectacle of, again, an educational institution flouting the law, defying no less than the Supreme Court, and even boasting to parents of its students that it has the capacity to delay execution of the final decision until "some years down the road."

In a background paper, the ISAE asks, with some exasperation: "Why, or how, is it possible that they (ISM) have the audacity to openly dance around the highest court and then brag that they have the courts' favor? This foreigner's view that manipulation in Philippine courts is endemic is not his view alone. When will the courts and DOLE finally have the courage, determination and guts to put an end to this sad, revealing and never-ending circus?"

The teachers thought that the circus had wound down in July 2000 when, after five years of CBA negotiations and contentious arguments before the DOLE and the courts, the Supreme Court ruled that the Filipino teachers at ISM were entitled to equal pay for equal work. But when Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas attempted to implement the Supreme Court decision in 2002, after a flurry of appeals from ISM, the school's lawyers inexplicably managed to secure a temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals, in effect reversing the Supreme Court!

* * *

THREE more years passed before the Court of Appeals finally bowed to the will of the Supreme Court, which I must say certainly moved glacially in this case to assert its authority.

But if the teachers thought the "final and executory" order held any real meaning, they had another think coming. At the scheduled pre-execution conference last Feb. 15, the lawyers of the school and the administrators, upon spotting the ISAE leaders and their lawyers, refused to sit down at the negotiation table, demanding a separate session with the DOLE official assigned to the case. To the astonishment of the ISAE and the teachers, the official seemed amenable to giving in to this unreasonable demand, which they immediately opposed.

"The issue seems to be now whether the writ (of execution) can ever be enforced," seethes Raquel David-Ching, ISAE president.

If Ching seems overcome with frustration, it could only be because while the school administration has failed to win its case for discrimination in the courts, it is achieving a de facto victory through attrition and delay.

* * *

WHEN the ISAE's case reached the Supreme Court, she says, Filipinos composed 80 percent of the faculty. Now they make up just over 30 percent. Of the original 147 petitioners, only 34 are still left in the school.

What happened? Well, many things can take place in the course of 10 years. Some teachers resigned or opted for early retirement, with the snail's pace of justice certainly contributing to their frustration. Others were systematically harassed and hounded out of their jobs. Most important, ISM refused to replace the Filipino teachers with other Filipinos, opting instead to hire from overseas. And the few Filipinos they took in were relegated to the new category of "teaching apprentice."

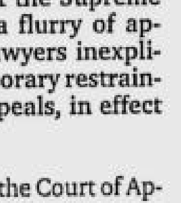
Through the years, the board and the parents at ISM have denied the Filipino teachers their support, with some arguing that if the school were forced to finally cough up the back wages it owes, tuition would shoot through the roof. But education at ISM is already even costlier than in the United States. The decision to make foreign hires the majority of the faculty has resulted in much higher salary costs overall, not including expenses for "expat" privileges such as housing in a posh condominium near the new ISM campus.

Like all racists before them, the ISM administrators may yet realize that all they have done is to cut off their nose to spite their face.

Treasures of Sta. Cruz Church

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



ONE of these days, I have to visit veteran photojournalist Ed Santiago in his modest Paco home to get a glimpse into my life two decades ago when we were both working for the now defunct Philippines Daily Express. He was, aside from Manny Goloyugo, the photographer I would always ask for because he was genuinely interested in the historical materials that ended up as illustrations for my magazine articles.

While sorting and filing these black and white photographs recently, I realized that whenever we went on a photo shoot—for example, reproducing artifacts, pictures and documents from the National Library, the National Archives or the Lopez Memorial Museum—he also took pictures of me at work. Now I can wax nostalgic over my lost youth.

One photograph has me peering out from the topmost window in the Emilio Aguinaldo mansion in Kawit, Cavite. Visitors are not allowed into the tower today, nor are they shown the numerous secret passageways and peep holes that dot the house. But even if I could push my weight around and insist on doing it again, I don't have the energy to climb the steep steps all the way to Aguinaldo's old lookout. I don't even think my overweight frame will fit into the pigeon coop I was photographed in.

Another photograph shows me on my knees at the door of Sta. Cruz Church in Manila. Despite five years of monastic training, this is not one of my favorite positions. I was not praying or atoning for my sins. Curious about an ancient granite slab there, I had poured water on it and started rubbing it with old newspapers. It turned out to be a tombstone (one of many around the church) marking the grave of Jose Herrera who died in 1800 at the age of 82. A photograph of the same tombstone is in the recently published book "Santa Cruz Church: A Living Heritage," by Anna Maria L. Harper who occupies this same column space on other days.

The book isn't in the bookstores yet, but can surely be acquired in the church. Lavishly illustrated, it covers the history of the church and parish from its beginnings in the late 16th century to 1945, the end of the last war.

What I found interesting, aside from the pictures, are the archival sources used. For example, Harper translated part of a physical inventory of the treasures of the church following the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Philippines in 1768. Reading the list helps us visualize the wealth of the church at the time, and also makes us understand why many ancient churches around the country are not only considered "heritage at risk" in terms of the physical structure but also because of the contents. Many churches and rectories, particularly in the Visayas, are consistently robbed from within and without, and the stolen church treasures are sold to antique collectors in Manila or sometimes exported abroad.

Harper provides a sampling:

"1. A gold crown of the image that is in the church with crystal stones; it weighed 6 marcos, 5 ounces and 77rrs in total removing the weight of the stones and some 2 ounces of silver from a half arch and 5 from the entire arch that is [illegible] that leaves pure gold of 5 marcos, 6 ounces and 7 rrs of the purest 20 carats; 2. A gold diadem of 18 carats that weighs 2 ounces and 4 rrs; 3. A sun of gold 20 carats weighed an ounce and 9 granos; 4. A potencia that weighed a total of three ounces, 7 rrs and a half; 5. Three gold rings with a ruby in each valued at a peso; 6. A Niño of ivory almost eight inches long with slippers and a girdle of gold, the adornment valued at 8 pesos and the ivory 2; 7. A gold crown of the Sto Niño of 17 carats with 70 false stones and 103 grains of small pearls weighing a total of eight ounces, 2 rrs and a half; 8. A gold brooch with 9 diamantes, the major one at the centre and the others valued at 300 pesos; 9. Two gold butterflies with 5 diamantes, each valued at 30 pesos; 10. Three flowers for the overdress of the Image with 425 medium-size pearls; 11. A forehead strap with a large diamante in the center and the rest false stones and 136 pearls as big as a chilantro gain valued at a hundred pesos; 12. An altar front of wood lined in silver measuring 26 x 12 inches (4 palms and a half in height and two palms in length) that according to prudent judgement based on the reliable opinion of the officer in charge of weights and measures contains 700 ounces of silver; 13. A crown and dress of silver of Our Lady of the Pillar with her child equally adorned; the silver according to the prudent judgement based on the reliable opinion of the officer in charge of weights and measures would reach 250 punces; the image has as well a pair of eardrops with 26 crystal stones set in gold and 4 brooches of silver with fake stones each and a crystal in front 7 quarters in height and 5 wide."

Reading the above gives one an idea of the images that were in the church. The *potencia* was one of the three rays projecting from behind the head of Christ; saints being of lesser importance had haloes. The forehead strap was worn by the Sto. Entierro or dead Christ in a bier. Surprisingly these images wore glittering but fake jewels mixed with the real thing.

A close review of Harper's material is worth a doctoral dissertation on art and cultural history. Which just goes to show that footnotes can be mined with profit.

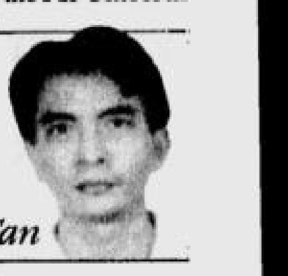
* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

School cults

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



WE usually think of our schools as safe havens for our children, a second home where they learn to explore the wonders of the world, and to live and work with others.

What happens though when the schools become a breeding ground for cults, where the teachers themselves become cult leaders?

That's what seems to have happened to the JCF School in Cagayan de Oro, the initials standing for Jesus Christ Followers. Last Jan. 28, the school had to be closed down when its officials refused to release a 16-year-old student who had left home after a quarrel with parents and sought refuge in the school.

There was fierce resistance when the police had to be sent in. A feature article last Sunday by the INQUIRER's J. B. Deveza said the JCF members fought police "wielding steel pipes, sticks, rocks and human excrement wrapped in plastic." Three policemen were injured in the fracas and 22 JCF teachers and students, including several who were also injured, were arrested and brought to the Lumbia Detention and Rehabilitation Center.

Court hearings have turned into circuses. I caught one newscast and watched with horror as the teachers insulted, threatened and cursed police and government officials while students went into hysterics, refusing to go home with their parents and insisting on being with their teacher-leaders.

High academic standards

It turns out that the January incident was only the latest in a series of encounters between the school and government officials.

The school was established in 1999 by Emelinda and Onofre Tiongco, both of whom had worked in the Middle East. The school's temporary permit expired two years ago and the Department of Education recommended that the school be closed down because it was using a curriculum different from DepEd's. The city council acted on the recommendation, passing a resolution to close down the school, but it was never implemented.

How different is the school's curriculum? Emelinda Tiongco, in a television interview using a pathetically contrived British accent shared by her fellow teachers, said that they were following the "British system." There are no Filipino subjects since these are considered irrelevant. Teachers and students use English, or at least Tiongco's peculiar British-Cebuano patois. The passing mark in JCF school is 90, much higher than the DepEd's current cut-off of 70, but Tiongco said that they intended to increase the passing mark to 95, and then to 100.

So sure are Tiongco and her teachers about their high academic standards that they have now refused the help of public lawyers. They insist that six of their students will be able to defend them in court.

True believers

The JCF controversy reminds us that schools are potential indoctrination grounds for cults, with no less than the teachers themselves taking on the role of cult leaders.

Teachers are often driven by personal ideals and beliefs, which in itself is a good thing. The danger though is that some teachers take on messianic visions of transforming students to fit into their mold.

The students are vulnerable for many reasons. First, they actually spend more time in schools than at home, a ready-made captive audience for would-be cult leaders. It's not just time spent in classrooms. I'd be careful with teachers that require frequent field trips and outings. It's during these times when students become too dependent on and trusting of their teachers.

I'd be very suspicious, too, about teachers who frequently get their students to hang out at their home, or insist on doing things together, whether eating, drinking or watching movies. If you don't end up with cults like this JCF school, there's a strong chance you're going to have sexual seduction and harassment. The worst-case scenario is a cult where the teacher-leader sexually exploits the student-followers.

A second reason students are so vulnerable to cult teachers is that the young see their teachers as all-knowing, and as authority figures. Sure, young people today are sharp, discerning, even cynical, but I'm actually more worried about the bright ones because they're the ones who may eventually be drawn to cult-like teachers, impressed by these teachers' seeming commitment, or by their rhetoric.

Once cult heads have some following, they move on to create true believers, followers who will never question their leaders. Any criticism is dismissed as coming from the ignorant. The leaders also paint themselves as the source of all good: "Without me, you would not be where you are today."

With time, cult leaders draw a following by painting themselves as being misunderstood, as being persecuted by the outside world. A siege mentality is created, with leaders constantly exhorting followers to be absolutely loyal and steadfast and to fight the outsiders, the non-believers.

Social malaise

The JCF controversy reminds us cults aren't just products of rural communities. Cagayan de Oro is a fairly cosmopolitan area, with very good schools like Xavier University. Yet, there was space for something like the JCF School to emerge.

JCF is, of course, an extreme example of schools turned cults, but be on the lookout too for schools that are more subtle in the way they indoctrinate students. I cringe at how we call our religious schools "sectarian" without realizing that there's a very thin boundary between being sectarian and being cultish. Schools and teachers that project themselves as the sole purveyors of truth should be looked at with suspicion. Intolerance of other faiths, of other political beliefs, of other lifestyles, has no place in modern education.

Recognize, too, how cults are often symptoms of deeper social malaise. Cults flourish when existing social institutions—families, faith-based groups—provide inadequate social support.

Cult followings grow on the anxieties of the times. Listening to Tiongco as well as her fellow teachers, with their "British" accents, I realized how in a way they were actually more of a secular rather than religious cult. They weren't preaching about salvation in heaven and eternal damnation in hell. Their message was that life now, as a Filipino in the Philippines, is hell itself, and that the way out is to use a "British system" in school so one could eventually seek salvation in overseas utopias.

"We will turn this country upside down," Emelinda Tiongco was quoted in last Sunday's INQUIRER. JCF alone could never do this, but we better watch out about all the little cults brewing out there, in and out of schools. Cults make us uncomfortable because, even as we shake our heads over the rantings of their leaders, we realize that they, too, are products of our own social institutions and that the values they speak of are those that we cherish and uphold.

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Benefits of a national ID

IT is high time that our country implement the national ID system. However, please do away with the plans to have it as a Smart Card complete with thumb mark and digitized signature as this will drive up the cost of implementation. Besides, how are newborn babies and young children going to be registered when the thumb mark and digitized signature will have to be updated as they grow up? The problem with our country is that we always want to fly even before we can walk.

In Taiwan, the card is just a simple card with a person's name, address, ID number, photo, the names of his/her parents and spouse. The photo is updated as a person grows up. A more meticulous background on the person is present in the hospital registry. Registration of a newly born child and updates are done in the local municipality.

The reason why we do not have a national ID system is that the United States does not have one. Our legislators like to ape American laws. However, the United States has a very efficient driver's license system, which is a very good substitute for a national ID.

There are economic benefits that we can derive from a national ID system. Imagine an economically challenged individual who can get a college loan from the bank in order to study. Or a small business proprietor getting that much-needed capital. Any loan defaulting individual will automatically be listed in a database. This should put pressure on borrowers to "do good" with the money and make proper repayments. More importantly, we can do away with the yearly "useless" *cedula*. The money meant for it can be rechanneled to maintaining the national ID system.

We can also apply a "demerit system" for petty crimes (jaywalking, spitting in public, walking shirtless, throwing garbage at improper places) by registering them on a person's ID. Someone who has jaywalked three times or caught vandalizing public property, for example, will be obliged to do community service and/or pay a fine. Failure to serve out a sentence will result in interest payments on the fine and/or more hours of community service. The national ID system will also improve tax collection efficiency.

The pros outweigh the cons. The cons that people see (abuse by illegal aliens to register, lack of privacy) are too immediate. We have to look ahead—years from now—before we can enjoy the system's advantages.

—IMELDA CHEN,
Tung Fong Industrial Co. Inc.,
Phase 3, Lot 10 & 12, Block 19,
Philippine Economic Zone
Authority, Rosario, Cavite

All but a forgotten battle

I AM the 48-year-old daughter of a deceased American veteran of the Battle for Manila. I was frustrated with the lack of news coverage given to the 60th anniversary of this battle. Especially here in the United States. (Only a 20-minute documentary was shown on Feb. 18 in the History Channel.)

This battle seems to have been completely forgotten. The sufferings and sacrifices of the liberators and the Filipino people do need to be made known so that the younger generations will have an opportunity to learn the lessons of the past and appreciate the freedom that others fought and died for.

Please continue to write about the liberation of the Philippines.

—NANCY GRAHAM SMITH,
North Wales, Pennsylvania, USA

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Misleading statistics

I WISH to commend well-known columnist Neal H. Cruz, in particular his Feb. 7 comments on "...misleading the public with statistics."

I believe that besides graft and corruption, another problem besetting our country today is credibility. I think only around 10 percent of our government officials are credible. I say this based on my own experience with government transactions and many people can attest to this.

Nobody trusts our government officials and employees anymore. They seem to have forgotten that "a public office is a public trust."

I also believe that one of the major causes of lost public confidence in our government officials is politics Philippine-style. I firmly believe that what we need today is moral leadership by example.

—HERIBERTO A. BAUTISTA,
municipal consultant,
Municipality of Pozorrubio,
Province of Pangasinan

Misdirected and unnecessary concerns

CESAR M. de los Reyes, in his letter, tries to terrorize and scare me by hinting that I could end up getting murdered for defending President Estrada. (PDI, 2/2/05) My end is up to the merciful Lord. What should bother De los Reyes is if any lawyer resorts to unethical practices. I can assure him it is possible to try to defend a client zealously within the rules.

The seemingly continuing fascination of some people about how much President Erap pays his lawyers bubbled up again in his letter. Is that his concern? It needlessly excites my ever-loving wife, creditors, solicitors, et al. But, if he must know, my earnings all my life have not enabled me to have a home I can call my own or even use a car newer than my 9-year-old edition.

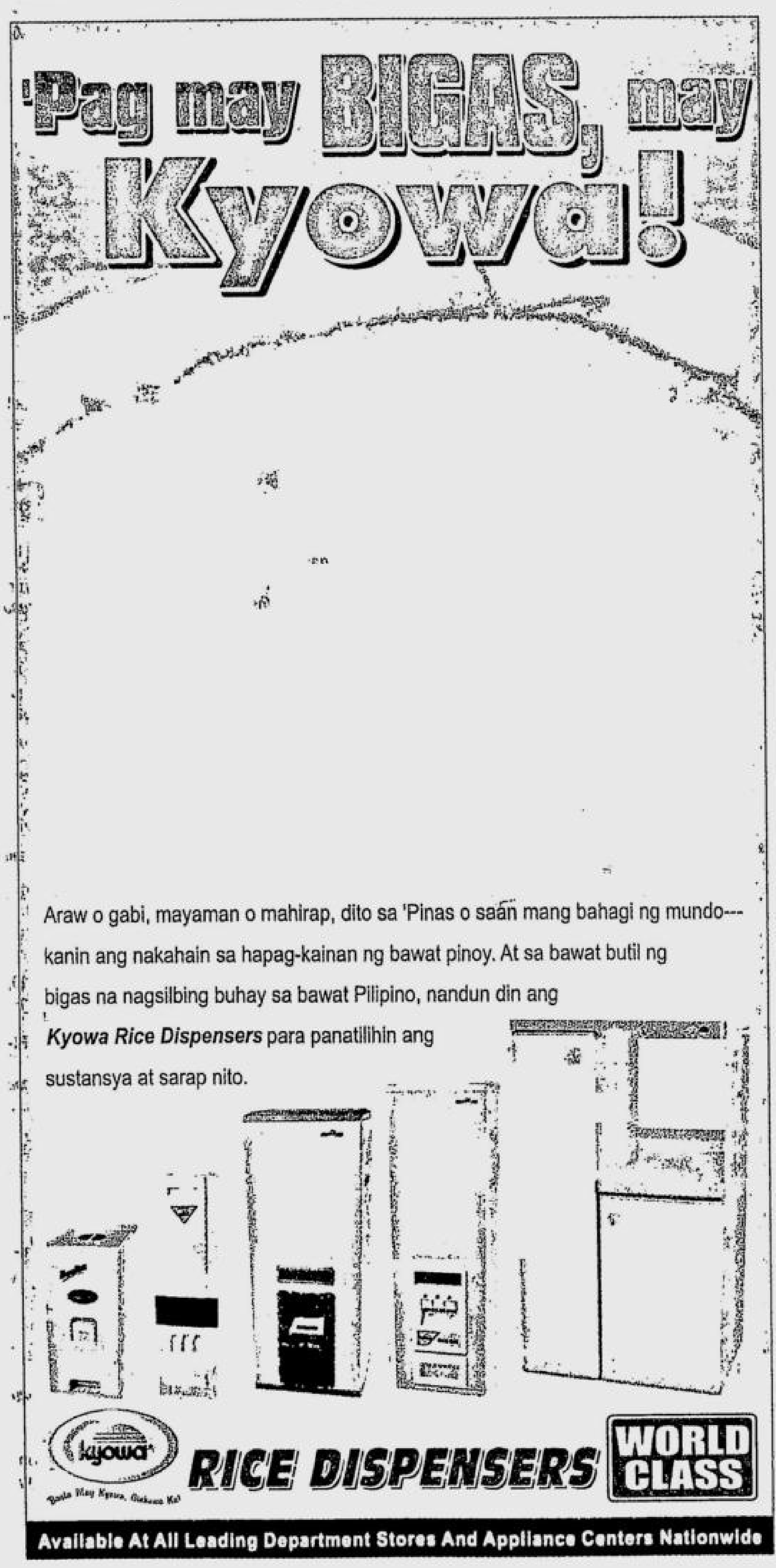
I do spend on pro bono cases and causes, a lifelong addiction. The Lord's Prayer speaks of daily bread. That is enough for me. All my life He has come up with what I need for the day. Maybe, at my age, I should ask for a two-day supply?

President Estrada, I criticized in power, beginning when he pushed for burying Ferdinand Marcos' remains at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Out of power, the underdog asked me to help. If somebody sends someone to death by lethal injection and that someone seeks my help, I will not make it easy for that somebody to overturn the constitutional presumption of innocence. I am philosophically opposed to the death penalty.

It would be impractical for me to consult De los Reyes on whether I take on a case or not. But even if Mother Teresa did get me, I would have remained the devil I am. If we would have integrity, we should take a stand on Uncle Jovy Salonga's judgment that from Day One Ms Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has not had any use for the rule of law.

I have had critics who one day found themselves in trouble, and realized the meaning of alone, and came to me for help. I hope De los Reyes or anyone he loves does not get into trouble with the law, but should it happen, and no all-weather friend would emerge, and he would think I could help, pro bono or not, let's talk. Lent has a message about "bad" people. Meantime, should the press use stuff with subtle terrorism or hate crime imbedded in it?

—R.A.V. SAGUISAG,
4045 Bigasan St.,
Palanan, Makati City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Araw o gabi, mayaman o mahirap, dito sa 'Pinas o saan mang bahagi ng mundo---kanin ang nakahain sa hapag-kainan ng bawat pinoy. At sa bawat butil ng bigas na nagsilbing buhay sa bawat Pilipino, nandun din ang *Kyowa Rice Dispensers* para panatilihin ang sustansya at sarap nito.

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DOE must prove claims

THANK you for accommodating our letter clarifying Abigail Ho's report, titled "Negros-Panay power link deferred." (PDI, 2/9/05)

We take note of Ho's reply to our letter saying that she is standing by her source, who according to her, "has been one of the most reliable all these months that she has been in the energy beat." We do not mean to question the judgment of Ho on the credibility of her source, much less, doubt the integrity of the Department of Energy official who revealed such information in anonymity.

We cannot, however, understand the motive of her source for not identifying himself. The statements he issued, as we have explained in our letter to your newspaper, could be misunderstood by the electric power industry stakeholders and could undermine our credibility. Moreover, it could erode their confidence in the Philippine government to undertake the reforms it envisions for the electricity business in the country.

Anyway, we respect the decision of Ho to conceal the identity of her informant. But we would like to reiterate that we never recommended the deferment of the Negros-Panay power interconnection for three years or, for that matter, hired consultants for the project.

The burden of proof now lies on the DOE official who claims to be privy to the transactions relating to this project. We urge him, as a responsible energy official, to bring forth a copy of the documents that will substantiate his statements.

—RODOLFO B. ALBANO JR.,
chair and chief executive officer,
Energy Regulatory Commission,
Pacific Center Bldg.,
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

Signature not disowned

NEAL H. Cruz asked (PDI, 2/25/05) why Comelec Commissioner Rufino Javier was included in the criminal complaint lodged with the Ombudsman in connection with the questionable award given by the Commission on Elections to Mega Pacific Consortium.

Indeed, in the award, it is the signature of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos that appears over the printed name of Rufino S.B. Javier, with an "OB" notation thereon; which should merely indicate that when the commission approved the award on April 15, 2003, Javier was not present on account of an "official business" to which he must have been then engaged.

Clearly, however, Abalos signed for Javier. At no time after April 15, 2003 did Javier ever disown the consequence of that signature. In law, failure of the principal to disown an act to which a representative had executed on his behalf amounts to adoption or acceptance of the act of the representative.

But more important, the acts of Javier in relation to this award would positively indicate that he was seriously in league in the formulation of the questioned grant. As early as Oct. 30, 2002—or nearly six months before the bidding and the grant of the award—he, with some Comelec commissioners and the top officers of Mega Pacific, together flew to Seoul, South Korea to visit SK C and C Ltd. (Mega Pacific's manufacturer of the "voting-counting" machines to be procured). These facts are all fully documented.

—EMILIO C. CAPULONG JR.,
Bantay Katarungan,
Kilosbayan House,
7 First St., Acacia Lane,
Mandaluyong City

US wars on world's patrimony

THE US ambassador's comments on Philippine-Iraq relationships, as quoted in the INQUIRER's Feb. 4 editorial have been duly noted.

Is it not distressing that whenever the United States engages in foreign hostilities, it is usually accompanied by severe damage to the world's cultural patrimony?

When American forces liberated Manila, it was expected that extensive bombing would take place to vanquish the occupying Japanese forces.

But once the city was taken, was it not unfortunate that an American quartermaster colonel would carry on the destruction of Intramuros, reportedly by razing century-old houses and churches just to convert this historic heart of the city into an ammunition storage area?

Dresden, the cultural capital of Saxony (and even of Germany) and hardly a military target, was flattened. A tragic loss for Europe. And more than 50,000 civilians were sacrificed to put pressure on Hitler, a miserable dictator, whose days were counted.

During the Vietnam war, bombs were dropped by the American air force on the imperial city of Hué and its old palaces.

The huge and recent damage in Iraq to the world patrimony, in a poorly planned occupation—(a preemptive war based on manipulated and false information), is even more distressing.

The United States was duly informed of the importance of the Baghdad Museum. Instead it chose to protect the oil ministry.

University libraries with unique historical books, priceless manuscripts, were lost forever. Iraqi archaeological sites all over the country are being devastated due to the collapse of administration and security. Should the United States not bear full responsibility for such irreparable destruction?

History will weigh the advantage of disposing of a cruel individual (which could have been done in the first Iraqi war) against the extensive damage being inflicted on the cradle of humanity. Such misdeeds are not over, as shown by the recent destruction of the town of Fallujah. Smashing a town to get rid of insurgents is absurd; they just fade away and reappear somewhere else. It is like hitting ants with a hammer.

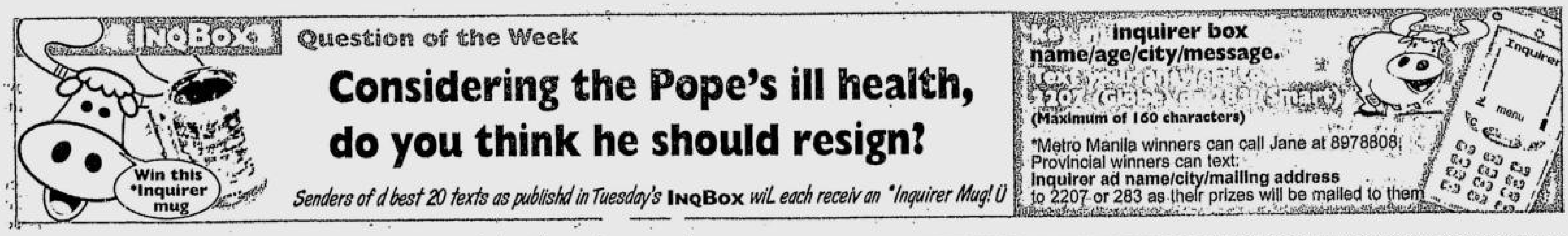
Ruins of antique houses or mosques serve as testimony to an outrageous military decision and occupation.

We certainly enjoy books or films showing cowboys in their environment. But is it asking too much of America, when it wages a war abroad, to assign educated people at places of responsibility, and not to leave to persons decisions concerning foreign countries if they do not have the slightest knowledge of the historical past of the places they have the power to wipe out?

Is the idea of carpet bombing from planes flying at 30,000 feet—"in order to save lives"—not a manifestation of cowardice and, therefore, should be banned? In my view it is as despicable as terrorism; applying it abroad (in a preemptive war) makes it even worse.

Have we progressed at all from the Middle Ages when people who held "unconventional" views were burned at the stake?

—W-A MIAILHE DE BURGH,
501 Burke Building
cor. Burke and Escolta, Manila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Question of the Week

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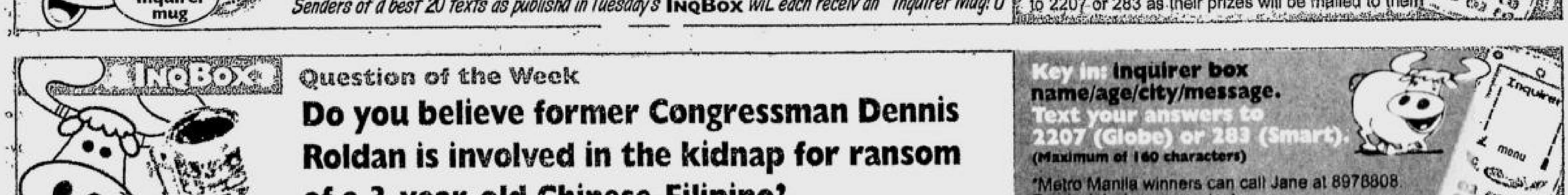
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Question of the Week

Do you believe former Congressman Dennis Roldan is involved in the kidnap for ransom of a 3-year-old Chinese-Filipino?

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Kidnappers free agriculture exec

COTABATO CITY—The agriculture official who was kidnapped in Lanao del Sur on Valentine's Day was freed without ransom at dawn yesterday, agriculture officials in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said.

Manda Amir Hamsa, Department of Agriculture and Food-ARMM assistant secretary, said Rogelio Creencia, DA soil and water management expert, was freed at 4 a.m. yesterday in the mountains of Lanao del Norte.

"He gained weight but he was obviously tired," Hamsa said.

Hamsa said the victim was freed without ransom but admitted his office had shelled out some amount as "mobilization fund" for those who worked for Creencia's release.

Earlier, the abductors who the military described as "neophytes" demanded P200,000 ransom in exchange for Creencia's freedom.

"We used a diplomatic approach in securing his release," Hamsa said. "Our emissary managed to convince the suspects to free Creencia because he came here to help our farmers become productive."

Creencia, 45, a native of Manila, was in Lanao del Sur on an official mission. He and another DAF-ARMM provincial official were on their way to Marawi City from Malabang, Lanao del Sur, when seized by three gunmen in Tugaya.

The military earlier theorized that the kidnapping had something to do with "internal" problems of DAF-ARMM, and that the abduction was carried out by disgruntled employees of the agriculture provincial office.

Ike Paguital, DAF-ARMM regional information officer, denied such reports and stressed that "there's no reason for our employees to be disgruntled."

Hamsa said the 20-day effort to secure Creencia's release cost them some P100,000. "The money was used for transportation, food and loads for mobile phones of our emissaries," he said.

Creencia and some DAF-ARMM officials were on their way to Marawi City to launch the government's "Tipid Abono Program" when blocked by armed men.

The "Tipid Abono" program is aimed at encouraging farmers to return to the use of organic fertilizers instead of the more expensive chemical-based plant growers.

Task Force Ranao chief Marine Gen. Ben Dolorfino earlier had raised suspicion that the abduction was an "internal problem" after receiving tips that many DAF-ARMM personnel have not been receiving their salaries and other benefits from the agency.

That suspicion was bolstered when the kidnappers singled out Creencia, a Manila-based official, as their lone target and let go of the other members of his entourage, Dolorfino said. *Edwin Fernandez and Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Palawan cherry to bloom again in Puerto streets

PHOTO FROM THE PALAWAN COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE

THE ENDEMIC Palawan cherry could be Puerto's match to the Sakura of Japan that draws tourists every spring.

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Just like the Sakura (Cherry Blossom) of Japan, which is in full bloom during these months, this city has the endemic Palawan cherry supposedly blooming this season, too.

But the city's massive development structures in the last decade have left the precious Palawan cherry in the sidelights.

The days when the city's main street, Rizal Avenue, was lined up with snow-like blossoms during the months of February and March were long gone.

Ellen Hagedorn, wife of Mayor Edward Hagedorn, said she had long been dreaming that one day she would again see the image of Puerto Princesa City teeming with cherry blossoms as it was in the 1960s until the 1980s.

To revive the lost Palawan cherry grandeur, the city government is celebrating its 133rd founding anniversary today (March 4), with the theme "Balayong Festival."

Balayong is a Cuyuno (the local dialect) term for Palawan cherry.

A thousand Palawan cherry trees will be planted in the city's nature park.

"This will just be the start of more Balayong trees to be planted," Mrs Hagedorn said.

The city, she said, would plant more trees in strategic areas during the rainy season so they will grow fast.

After about three years, Palawan cherry starts blooming.

"When I was tourism officer, our Japanese guests would say that our Palawan cherry is more beautiful than the cherry blossoms in Japan," Mrs Hagedorn said.

She said that when Palawan cherry is in full bloom, it could be another tourist attraction like in Japan, where tourists flock just to see the Sakura in many areas, especially in parks.

According to the book, A Pictorial Guide to the Noteworthy Plants of Palawan, published by the Palawan Tropical Forestry Protection Program, the Palawan cherry (scientific name: Cassia x 'Palawan Cherry') is a small to medium-sized tree, 15 meters or taller and 50 cm in diameter.

The leaves are pinnate, 40 cm long, while the leaflets are ovate—with acute tips, green in color and smooth on both surfaces.

Flowering branches are usually drooping, 30 cm long. The light pink flowers are in loose panicles.

This plant is widespread in Palawan often planted in parks and gardens, also at the edge of forests.

The Balayong Festival's highlight is the civic parade today, where everyone will be in white and pink to depict the flowers of the Palawan cherry.

Even Mayor Hagedorn will not be spared from wearing pink and white, said Mrs Hagedorn.

The celebration started Feb. 28 with different activities everyday like dog shows, food festival, bazaars, nightly shows and free concerts.

The Mutya ng Balayong Festival will also be crowned today. Aside from cash prizes, the winner will bring home a specially-designed Swarovski crystal-studded crown.

Mrs Hagedorn said this might be the last beauty contest sponsored by the city because an ordinance prohibiting the display of candidates in swimsuits is being discussed at the provincial council. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Anti-illegal fishing drive backed

THE BUREAU of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources is supporting Alaminos City Mayor Hernani Braganza of Pangasinan in his campaign to wipe out illegal fishing off the Hundred Islands in an effort to save the islands' vast marine resources. Cesar Galera, the chief of BFAR's monitoring, control and surveillance section, said in a press statement he was invoking Republic Act 8550, or the Fisheries Code of 1998. "We advise local officials to coordinate with us before, during and after the apprehension so that the bureau could provide appropriate assistance," he said. Braganza lauded BFAR for its move to support Alaminos City in curbing illegal fishing using dynamites, cyanide or electricity off the Hundred Islands. "I am doing this for the welfare of the local folk and the future generation. I have to impose the law though I can't please everybody," he said.

Soldier wounded in clash

DAVAO CITY—An Army corporal was wounded when his unit clashed with communist rebels in Sto. Tomas town in Davao del Norte on Tuesday. Lt. Col. Agane Adriatico, military spokesperson for Southeastern Mindanao, identified the wounded soldier as a certain Cpl. Tayaban of the Army's 73rd Infantry Battalion. Adriatico said the soldiers were on patrol when they chanced upon 80 New People's Army rebels in Sitio San Agustin in Barangay Bobongon in Sto. Tomas town. There was no confirmation about rebel casualties, he said. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

2 killed in clash with police

DAVAO CITY—Two armed men were killed in a gunfight with police in Barangay Bagu Anged, Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur on Tuesday afternoon. Col. Amerodin Hamdag, police provincial director, said the fighting started when about 10 armed men forcibly entered the house of SPO3 Saman Ali in Barangay Bagu Anged. Ali was not inside his house. But a militiaman, Maning Dalupang, who was at the house that time, was wounded when shot by the suspects. Hamdag said policemen engaged the armed men in a gunfight that led to the killing of two of the suspects, Jack Desomundeg and Mangundatu Pangandaman. The armed men were allegedly led by Desomundeg, who had several criminal records including multiple murder, robbery and kidnapping. Police recovered an M-79 grenade rifle from the crime scene. *Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Nuns from Italy open mission

VICTORIA, Laguna—The Italy-based Daughters of Virgin Mary Immaculate (DVMI) formally established its Philippine-Indonesian Mission during the Eucharistic celebration held at the parish church of New Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City. Sr. Ma. Blandina Perez, sister superior of the community here, said the canonical erection of the Philippine-Indonesian delegation also installed its first Delegate Superior Italian Sr. Ma. Giovana de Zan. The DVMI 31-member congregation here has been in the Philippines for about 23 years now. On March 1 last year, the congregation celebrated its 150th anniversary. De Zan said their group had worked with families of squatters just outside the posh residences of multimillionaires in Ayala, Alabang. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

OFW killed by neighbor

GUINOBATAN, Albay—An overseas worker on vacation here was killed while her mother and brother were seriously wounded when their neighbor attacked them over a land dispute at about 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. Senior Insp. Gerson Oserin, Guinobatan police chief, identified the slain victim as Janet Salvador, 40, of Sitio Sagaysay in Barangay Maguiron. Salvador's mother Crestita and brother Joseph suffered wounds in different parts of the body caused by a kitchen knife. Suspect Rodolfo Narvaez, 43, of the same place, is being treated at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital here due to bullet wounds after a policeman shot him. *Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Puffer fish kills man

TABACO CITY—A 40-year-old fisherman from San Miguel Island here died Thursday after eating puffer fish, locally known as "butete," police said. Crispin Burac died a few minutes after eating the puffer fish for lunch, according to Hegino Braga, a village security force member who reported the incident to authorities. Braga said Burac was hesitant to eat the fish, so he first fed part of it to a chicken and a dog. When nothing happened to the animals after a few minutes, Burac decided to eat the food as he was already very hungry. After almost an hour, the victim complained of dizziness and stomachache. While the neighborhood was preparing to take Burac to the hospital, they noticed that the chicken and the dog also died. Dr. Marissa Saguinsin, City Health Office physician, said Burac could have died of poisoning. She warned the public to avoid eating puffer fish.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Veluz first death anniversary

THE FAMILY of Lucy Baluyot Veluz, of Del Gallego, Camarines Sur, who died on March 6 last year, is requesting the pious to pray for her on the first anniversary of her death. Mass will be offered on Sunday, March 6, at the Hearts of Jesus and Mary Church in Quezon City, the Santisima Trinidad Parish in Estrada, Malate and at the Sta. Rita de Casia Church in Del Gallego, Camarines Sur.

400 families lose homes in 2 Cebu fires

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Over 400 families were rendered homeless in two fires that hit Mandaue and Cebu cities just as the country began observing March as Fire Prevention Month.

In Mandaue City, 427 families lost their homes in a fire that broke out in the densely-populated Sitio Lower Sampaguita, Barangay Banilad at around 3:25 p.m. on Wednesday.

The Mandaue City Fire Department reported that 194 houses were destroyed in the fire that lasted for an hour and five minutes.

Fire Investigator SFO1 Marcial Vilvestre said the fire started in the house of Isidra Juvenario, who was out at the time of the fire.

Vilvestre said they are investigating reports that the fire was caused by a cooking accident after a bottle of kerosene was mistaken for cooking oil.

No casualties were reported in the Mandaue fire. Damage was estimated to reach P2.3 million, said Vilvestre.

Social officer Violeta Cavada of the Mandaue City Social Welfare Office said the fire victims were temporarily housed at the Banilad Elementary School and at the nearby Calvary Church.

Cavada said the city government has already provided food and relief goods to the victims.

In Cebu City, at least 10 houses, including a bakeshop and an eatery, were destroyed in a fire that hit Wilson Street corner Torralba Street in Barangay Apas at 7:15 a.m. yesterday.

SFO1 Ali Kasem Espinola, of the Cebu City Fire Department, said the damage was placed at P350,000 and no one was hurt.

Total log ban to stay in Nueva Ecija, Aurora but may be lifted in Mindanao

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The total log ban prompted by the killer landslides in eastern Luzon last year remains in full effect over Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Quezon and other parts of the country, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said in a Senate hearing on Wednesday.

However, Defensor told senators that studies were being done to find out the viability of lifting the moratorium in Southern Mindanao and Caraga regions, said Regidor de Leon, executive director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Luzon. De Leon accompanied Defensor in the hearing.

Southern Mindanao is composed of the provinces of Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental, while Caraga is made up of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur.

In citing the possible lifting of the ban in these regions, De Leon said Defensor cited some good logging practices there.

"Overall, the secretary wants a sustainable forest management program that protects and conserves the country's remaining forests but also answers the needs of wood-based industries," De Leon said on Thursday.

Defensor also told senators that the log ban he imposed starting Dec. 8 last year had raised concerns for the plight of two million workers in the furniture-manufacturing sector and had given rise to the demand for imported wood valued at $700 million yearly.

Defensor's memorandum called for the cancellation of all logging permits in Quezon and suspension of all permits in the rest of the country.

A Dec. 14 memorandum contained clarifications that included a strict prohibition on the "movement, transport and/or delivery of logs and/or manufactured/processed wood products harvested from Aurora and Quezon to any point of destination outside said areas."

Except in Aurora and Quezon, the order allowed the harvesting of planted trees and non-timber forest products from titled private lands registered with the DENR.

De Leon said Defensor was not inclined to cancel the moratorium in Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Quezon, all on the eastern side of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges. At least 1,500 people in those provinces died from landslides that occurred on the heels of four successive typhoons last year.

In Central Luzon's seven provinces, the DENR suspended 23 integrated forest management agreements covering 110,897 hectares, 286 socialized integrated forest management agreements covering 8,510 hectares, three timber license agreements covering 46,061 hectares and a special private land timber license covering 12,895 hectares. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Gloria inaugurates silk center showroom in Negros

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday inaugurated the Negros Silk Center showroom in Barangay Tabunan, Bago City that she said would address three major national concerns—job creation, income generation and reforestation.

The Negros Silk Center produces 83 percent of the country's silk yarn and provides jobs to 300 farmers in San Carlos, Talisay and Bago cities and Don Salvador Benedicto town who raise Mulberry trees for cocoon production, said Thelma Watanabe, president of the Negros Mayu and Silkworm Corp.

Watanabe said that last year, the farmers produced four metric tons of raw silk for Negros Mayu, which markets the silk produced in Negros Occidental.

Established by the Negros Occidental provincial government, the Negros Silk Center serves as a one-stop shop for those who want to know the opportunities that the silk industry can offer and the aesthetic importance of silk, Watanabe said.

The center showcases the different processes in producing raw silk and its by-products and aims to promote Negros Occidental as an agri-tourism and silk novelty destination.

Silk production involves the culture of Mulberry trees. Aside from its job creation and income generation potentials in the countryside, Mulberry tree culture can also help address the country's serious reforestation concerns, Watanabe said.

Mulberry culture was introduced in 1988 in Murcia, an upland area in Negros Occidental, by the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA), a civic and non-government organization founded by the late Dr. Yonosuke Nakano in Japan.

OISCA seeks to help farmers find alternative livelihood by giving them access to technology, capital and institutional development support.

The continuing expansion of the demand for cocoon and silk yarn in the world market has encouraged Negros farmers to venture into silk production, she said.

The Negros Occidental provincial government now supports the project by providing loans to farmers who want to go into silkworm production.

Watanabe said their target is to involve more farmers in cocoon production because they have not been able to meet the growing demand for silk yarn, noting that their reeling facility is operating under capacity.

She said the provincial government has a pending proposal with the National Economic and Development Authority for a silkworm egg breeding program.

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Group condemns arrest of 4 women activists

LUCENA CITY—The militant women's group Gabriela and the Gabriela Women's Party have condemned the illegal arrest of their four leaders and coordinators in Quezon.

The arrest came even as women started to celebrate Women's Month this March.

"Is this the way the AFP and the Arroyo administration greet women on Women's Month?" Emmi de Jesus, Gabriela secretary general, said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

According to De Jesus, the security patrol that arrested the four was participating in operations to secure US troops participating in the ongoing Balikatan exercises in Southern Tagalog.

"The incident only goes to show that the security of the American soldiers is priority over the civil and human rights of the Filipino people," she said.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, the commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command, however, said the four women were suspected New People's Army rebels.

He said they were arrested by the police and the military on Tuesday in Sampaloc, Quezon on suspicion they were spying on troops taking part in the Balikatan in Luisiana town in Laguna.

"The communists have previously declared that they would attack the Balikatan forces," Cabuay told newsmen.

He also presented to newsmen copies of supposedly communist documents that were confiscated from the four suspects.

One of the documents gave instructions on how to collect revolutionary taxes.

Cristina Palabay, Gabriela Women's Party secretary general, added that the illegal arrest of the women leaders is the latest reaffirmation of the military and police's record of being the worst human rights violators in the country.

Gabriela demanded the immediate end to the Balikatan and called for the immediate release of the detained women leaders.

On Wednesday, Supt. Rueben Theodore Sindac, chief of the Quezon Police Intelligence and Investigation Office, reported the arrest of Leonila Manalo, Miralyn Gamba, Aileen Ramos and Nancy Elle.

Sindac said the four were arrested Tuesday noon while allegedly conducting a lecture inside the Delgado Resort in Barangay Batan.

A police report said at least three .38 cal. revolvers, a fragmentation grenade and communist documents were seized from the women.

Sindac said they were also investigating whether the captured suspects could also be part of an NPA hit team that killed Senior Supt. Eduardo Sebastian, former Quezon police chief, on Jan. 12.

When the INQUIRER visited the women currently detained at the Quezon provincial jail in Lucena City, they assailed police and the military for concocting lies and deceit in their supposed arrest.

"We're not NPA rebels," said Gamba, Gabriela-Quezon chair. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Outage spoils start of Bukidnon feast

MALAYBALAY CITY—A sudden power interruption spoiled Tuesday's start of the Kaamulan, Bukidnon's annual thanksgiving festival.

A fuming Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri immediately called up the office of the National Transmission Corp. but it did not help.

Because of the 20-hour power outage that started about 5 p.m. Tuesday, a scheduled concert sponsored by San Miguel Beer at the capitol grounds here, which people have been looking forward to, had been cancelled.

Those operating food stalls said they were hoping for brisk sales but the power outage drove people away from the capitol.

Dustin Estrada, one of the food concessionaires, told the INQUIRER that his goat *caldereta* dish, worth about P800, was spoiled.

"I would have lost much if I bought the goat. Had I known that the power would not be immediately restored, I could have already asked friends to order and pay for it later," Estrada said.

Danilo Jumawan, another food stall owner, told the INQUIRER that he only reached about three percent of his target sales.

Except for some enterprising children who sold kerosene-fueled lamps, none of the stall operators made much money.

Rufino Magbanua, Transco spokesperson, said the power failure was caused by a damage in the insulator of the 69 kilovolt line that runs between Valencia City and Busco in Quezon town. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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2nd to 41st Placers - Outlay of ₱171,000.00 for each of the forty (40) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees throughout the Architecture program or in any four- or five-year Engineering program requiring board examinations offered at the TIP ....₱6,840,000.00

42nd to 101st Placers - Outlay of ₱13,500.00 for each of the sixty (60) scholars to cover tuition and other basic miscellaneous school fees for one (1) semester in Architecture or in any four- or five-year Engineering program requiring board examinations offered at the TIP ....₱810,000.00

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■ Gov. Demetrio Quirino, Sr. Friday, March 11, 2005
■ Sec. Guillermo De Vega Friday, March 18, 2005

SCHEDULE OF EXAMINATIONS:
■ Pres. Elpidio Quirino Saturday, March 5, 2005
■ Gov. Demetrio Quirino, Sr. Saturday, March 12, 2005
■ Sec. Guillermo De Vega Saturday, March 19, 2005

■ TIME AND PLACE OF EXAMINATIONS:
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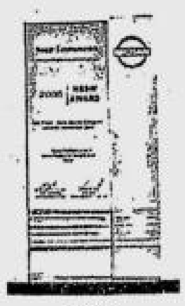
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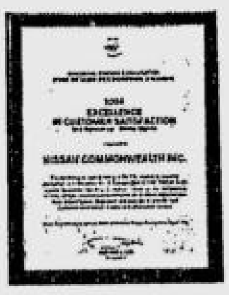
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Lawmaker dares Church to debate

From page A1

them text messages.

The bill, co-authored by 52 representatives, has been approved for plenary debate by the House committee on women, chaired by Nueva Ecija Rep. Josefina Joson.

But Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said much of the criticism directed at Ligtas Buntis could be traced to misconceptions.

He said the program was premised, not on population control, but on safeguarding the health of mothers and children.

"We want to get pregnant women, as well as those who are yet to get pregnant, into a health system that can actually advise them and provide them services. That's the main purpose [of the program]," Dayrit told reporters at a press conference.

Lawmakers as target

Lagman said the campaign of the CBCP against the consolidated bill "targets not only the faithful but more so legislators with greater intensity."

He said HB 3773 was principally based on his original HB 16, which proposed, among other things, the non-compulsory ideal family size of two children and the mandatory "age-appropriate" sex education from Grade 5 to fourth year high school, with a common curriculum for public and private schools.

"Unfortunately, the Church hierarchy is either grossly misinformed or deliberately misinforming the people about the actual issues," Lagman said.

He pointed out that, under HB 3773, only medically safe and legal contraceptives would be disseminated, and the distribution of abortifacients (or abortion-inducing drugs) would not be allowed.

Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, one of the co-authors, said the Church had branded the bill as "antifamily" and "antilife." He said a text message had spread claiming that the proposed law was abetting abortion.

"It is very unfortunate that this text message is apparently being disseminated by supposedly pious people who are expected to speak only of the truth," he said, adding:

"[Those opposed to] this measure should stop spreading falsehood and argue on its merits."

Remulla said Congress would never enact a law that would promote an "unlawful act like abortion."

He said he would be the first to withdraw his support for the bill if its detractors could offer solutions to the population problem.

Informed choice

According to Lagman, HB 3773 condemns abortion as a criminal act.

He said safe and legal contraceptives actually prevented unwanted pregnancies that were the major cause of abortions, which numbered "more than 400,000 annually."

"There is no bias against the Church-endorsed natural family planning methods because information and access are universally promoted for all modes of family planning, from the natural to the modern, except abortion," Lagman said.

The proposed law will not be coercive because it prioritizes "the freedom of informed choice where women and couples are free" to adopt their chosen methods of family planning, he said.

Dayrit also said that under Ligtas Buntis, health workers would not go around distributing pills or condoms to couples who did not want them or knew very little about them.

"I assure the bishops that we continue to work on it, that we remind our field workers that there should be no coercion," he said, stressing that the program's "focus" was "what the family needs and what [it] may want."

A matter of conscience

Expected to attend today's rally are Church members including five bishops, parish priests, religious superiors, seminarians and El Shaddai members; representatives of Muslim communities; pro-life legislators, and others invited by the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Family and Life.

Dayrit said the rally should be taken positively because it would expand the discussion on family planning, reproductive health and population control.

"The Church as an institution is *a priori* against any form of contraception or any form of sterilization," he said. "That should be made clear to everyone. [In] a Catholic country, that is what they teach, and Catholics should listen to that message."

But there should also be openness to those Catholics who do not believe in the message, Dayrit said.

He urged the people to view Ligtas Buntis in accordance with their conscience, and said those opposed to it could serve as "conscientious objectors."

"You can decide on the basis of your religious belief. If it's against your principle, then manifest it," he said.

Dayrit cited the case of a health worker who had an "extreme aversion" to the idea of Ligtas Buntis: "It's OK if she doesn't want to support it at all."

'Save the family'

Also expected to attend today's rally are members of the newly formed Kilusang Sagip Sanggol, Ligtas Pamilya (KSSLP).

Pete Villanueva, president of the Church Council for the Laity and a KSSLP member, described HB 3773 and Ligtas Buntis as "government projects that aim to destroy the stability of the family and disregard its sanctity."

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, founder of Pro-Life Philippines, said the government should not interfere in family planning because, in his opinion, "the answer to the country's economic problem is good governance, not population control."

Atienza also said the propagation of birth control would eventually give rise to the practice of abortion.

A Muslim leader in Quiapo, Datu Amerol Gulam Ambiong, agreed: "We of the Islamic faith are against abortion. It is like killing somebody, and Muslims do not believe in killing, especially the innocent."

Foreign groups

Atienza raised the specter of foreign groups lobbying for laws that would promote the use of contraceptives.

He claimed that foreigners feared population increase lest this empower the Philippine government to become more independent.

Lawyer Jo Imbong of the CBCP cited the release of $1.4 million from the United Nations fund for population control, supposedly for the Philippines' reproductive health program.

"There is money for so-called reproductive health, but not for school buildings," she said.

Generation of sex maniacs

Imbong also said the campaign to promote the use of contraceptives failed to reveal the side effects of such devices on women's health.

The KSSLP railed against what it said was the promotion of immorality through sex education.

"Can you imagine sex education in Grade 5? I don't want my children to go down that dark path. We will be creating a generation of sex maniacs," Atienza said. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

Issuance of nat'l ID only needs guidelines—Palace

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SIMPLE act of issuing guidelines before implementing a national identification system is enough to make it legal even without going through the legislative route, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to issue an executive order enforcing the adoption of an "all-purpose ID" would address all legal issues raised in a 1998 Supreme Court decision declaring as unconstitutional a national ID system without Congress approval.

"If there are guidelines, and if these guidelines are observed when an agency other than Congress [implements the ID system], that will be a valid delegation of legislative power," said Bunye, a lawyer.

He said the tribunal's ruling—that then President Fidel Ramos' planned national ID program was a usurpation of Congress' power to legislate—was due to the absence of guidelines, which made it an invalid delegation of power.

This is why Ms Arroyo has instructed the National Economic and Development Authority to draft within 10 days the guidelines for the adoption of an all-purpose ID that would incorporate data contained in Philhealth cards, voter IDs, and cards issued by the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita expressed confidence that this time, the government would hurdle all legal impediments to the establishment of a national ID system. But he could not explain exactly how.

"I spoke with several leaders of the Senate and the House, and they said that we don't need a law for it and that an EO would suffice... I suppose that if this comes out, somebody would have to go to court and let the Supreme Court decide on it," Ermita said.

Even Merceditas Gutierrez, the President's chief legal counsel, could not quite clear things up.

"We can address this by not thinking that we are treading on constitutional grounds," she said.

As far as Senate President Franklin Drilon is concerned, the best way to swing the controversial proposal is for Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes to stop talking about it. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

IDs for newborn babies, too

From page A1

birth certificates.

The idea of issuing IDs to newborns will be implemented while Congress goes through the paces of enacting a law on the controversial ID system that the administration is pushing.

The President said the concept of a national ID had also been given a push through the electronic card system that the Government Service Insurance System had established for its members.

"Since the GSIS was the first to come out with the E-card, we will now require the Social Security System, the Land Transportation Office, and other agencies to come up with cards operable with the GSIS cards," Ms Arroyo said here on Tuesday.

She said the government would also have to come up with a protocol on the numbering of the IDs.

The President has directed Secretary Romulo Neri of the National Economic and Development Authority to take charge of efforts to produce ID cards compatible with those of the various government agencies, to approximate a national ID system.

Neri also supervises the National Statistics Office. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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Demonstrations greet Mining Act's 10th year

By D.J. Yap

STANDING less than 5 feet tall, Nelson Mallari of Tribong Magindi in Pampanga stood his ground yesterday against a gargantuan enemy: the Philippine mining industry.

The 32-year-old leader of the Central Luzon Aeta Association linked arms with environment, church and militant groups to protest mining activities and what they considered a decade of atrocities against the environment and indigenous peoples.

Yesterday was the 10th anniversary of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, an occasion antimining advocates marked with a series of demonstrations along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, and Mendiola in Manila.

The lone representative of his people, Mallari said mining activities in the country had displaced indigenous communities, robbed them of their culture, and degraded the environment where they lived.

At least two mining firms are digging for gold and copper in his hometown, said Mallari.

Clemente Bautista, a leader of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, said protest actions held simultaneously in Baguio, Davao City, Iloilo and Surigao City sought the repeal of the Mining Act.

NIDA BLANCA SLAY CASE

Rod wants warrant junked

By Armand N. Nocum

AMERICAN Rod Lauren Strunk, prime suspect in the murder of his wife, actress Nida Blanca, has asked the Supreme Court to stop the serving of a warrant for his arrest.

Through his lawyers from the Siguion Reyna Law Office, Strunk also asked the High Court to throw out the criminal complaint against him for the murder of Blanca "for lack of probable cause."

2001 crime

Blanca was found dead inside her car parked at the sixth floor of the Atlanta Centre building in San Juan on Nov. 7, 2001.

In a 62-page petition for review on certiorari, Strunk's lawyers sought that "a writ of permanent injunction be issued restraining the implementation of arrest warrant against Rod Strunk and the conduct of the trial insofar as Strunk is concerned."

The arrest warrant was issued in May last year by Judge Alex L. Quiros of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 156.

The Department of Justice is using the order of Quiros in the extradition case against Strunk, who left the country for California in January 2002.

In his petition, Strunk asked the court not to allow the 3-year-old case to drag on in the face of alleged lack of evidence linking him to the crime.

'Height of injustice'

"To allow these criminal proceedings to continue in the face of the clear insufficiency of evidence against him would be the height of injustice," the document said.

It added, "The demands of justice mandate that this unfounded case against him be dismissed for utter lack of persuasive, competent and credible evidence."

The petition noted that so far, the case has been anchored on the "recanted and internally flawed and obviously false confession" of Strunk's co-accused, Philip Medel.

Medel, who owned up to the crime, later claimed that he was tortured into making a confession.

But late last year, a new witness surfaced and claimed that she saw Strunk at the crime scene with Medel and another suspect the night before Blanca's body was discovered.

Governement prosecutors said they had two more witnesses who would corroborate the claims of Andrada "Anji" Dalandas.

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EZ2
3 9

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BOOK WORMS

AP

Students play on a slide made to look like a stack of books in a Quezon City park during Thursday's celebration of World Book Day, held to encourage students develop a reading habit.

Police, NBI clash on who burned van

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POLICE and the National Bureau of Investigation have both tagged communist rebels as responsible for the torching of an ABS-CBN news van in January.

But as to which communist group it was, the NBI's and police's intelligence units could not have disagreed more.

The NBI has pointed to the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade as the culprit.

Two suspects

Yesterday, the bureau presented two suspects, allegedly members of the group, in the burning of the P35-million TV van.

But Director Robert Delfin, a senior intelligence official and the police's former spy chief, says a special operations group of the Communist Party of the Philippines was responsible for the burning.

Not only that, Delfin says the CPP-NPA was actually after the ABS-CBN tower in Quezon City. He did not, however, explain why the leftist guerrilla movement would want to paralyze the TV network's operations.

Split

The RPA-ABB split from the CPP in the 1990s and is one of many groups that left the main communist body because of differences in ideology and strategy.

The two groups are hostile to each other.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco had said the torching was "uncharacteristically ABB" and was apparently baffled why it would attack the ABS-CBN van.

But in a statement, the RPA-ABB, more known for targeting political and police figures, denied the accusation although it said the suspects were its comrades.

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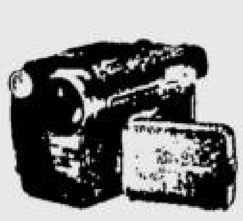

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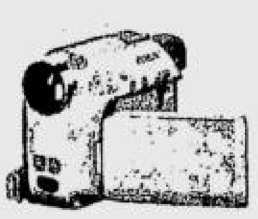

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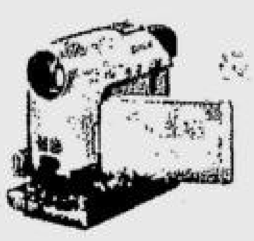

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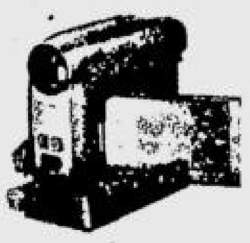

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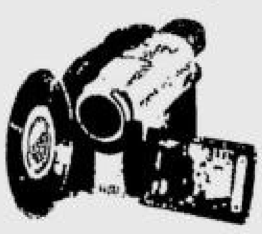

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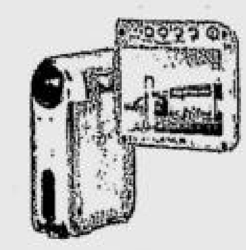

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Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**
Assistant Editor **Cenon B. Bibe Jr.**

WHAT used to be an antique shop and office on tony McKinley Road is now just dying embers and a memory after a two-hour fire hit a bungalow in Forbes Park early yesterday morning. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Antiques, house destroyed in Forbes fire

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN LESS than two hours, millions of pesos went up in smoke when fire hit a one-story house in a ritzy Makati City village at dawn yesterday.

Investigators said the blaze started around 1:45 a.m. in a bungalow that housed an office and an antique shop on No. 44 McKinley Road, Forbes Park in Makati City.

"Residents of the house woke up to the smell of smoke, but by the time they were able to gather their belongings, the blaze had already spread," said Fire Officer 1 Ervic Gavieres, arson investigator from the Makati City Fire Department.

Gavieres said five employees of Ruby Nazer, who had leased the house from owner George Martirez, were sleeping inside the house when the fire started. The five escaped without injuries, but a big part of the bungalow was damaged.

Destroyed in the fire were pieces of antique furniture and decor, as well as home furnishings and appliances.

The fire department has yet to determine the cause of the blaze, and an estimate on damages was also unavailable.

Gavieres said he has yet to locate the portion of the house with the heaviest damage.

Investigators said there were no cooking appliances inside the office where the fire may have originated.

Roldan faces kidnap raps

By Armand N. Nocum

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice (DOJ) yesterday filed kidnap-for-ransom charges against actor and former Congressman Dennis Roldan for the abduction of a 3-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy, saying it has "sufficient evidence" to pin him down as the mastermind.

In a five-page complaint filed before the Pasig City Regional Trial Court, state prosecutors cited as evidence the confessions of two of eight suspects in the kidnapping, police surveillance reports on the movements of the suspects, and transcriptions of outgoing and incoming messages from one of three cellular phones used by the group involved in the ransom negotiations.

"Upon examination, we found sufficient evidence to indict Roldan of the crime charged," DOJ state prosecutor 3 Pablo C. Formaran told reporters.

The complaint also said that "probable cause" exists against Roldan, whose real name is Mitchel Yap Gumabao.

The complaint was signed by Formaran, prosecution attorney Irwin A. Maraya and approved by Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito R. Zuno and Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Fadullon.

Also accused of kidnapping are Alberto Pagdanganan, Noel San Andres, Romeo Orcajada, Rowena San Andres, Octavio Garces and Adrian Domingo.

The six—excluding Roldan's alleged lover Suzette Wang—have not yet been formally charged. Wang is set to appear before the DOJ at 10 a.m. today to face a preliminary investigation.

Formaran said they had to move quickly after Roldan withdrew his waiver of detention on Wednesday, a move that would have released him from detention at the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Pacer) headquarters in Camp Crame in 36 hours.

According to the complaint, Kenshi Yu, who was kidnapped on Feb. 9 near the ATC Tower, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, was held by the suspects in two separate safehouses in Quezon City.

The break came when Pacer operatives received a tip on the presence of the suspects and the boy at a safehouse, and promptly placed the home under surveillance. Roldan, Garces, Wang and Pagdanganan were seen visiting the house, the complaint said.

The victim was rescued in the early morning of Feb. 20, but the night before, Pacer operatives saw "Gumabao, Garces, [Wang] and Pagdanganan... having a meeting" at the Maximus restaurant in Quezon City owned by Roldan. The kidnappers, using three mobile phones, later demanded P250 million in ransom from the Yus, but lowered this to P3 million.

Garces and Pagdanganan also executed "extra-judicial confessions," owning up to the crime. Garces also tagged Roldan as the "mastermind together with Suzette [Wang]."

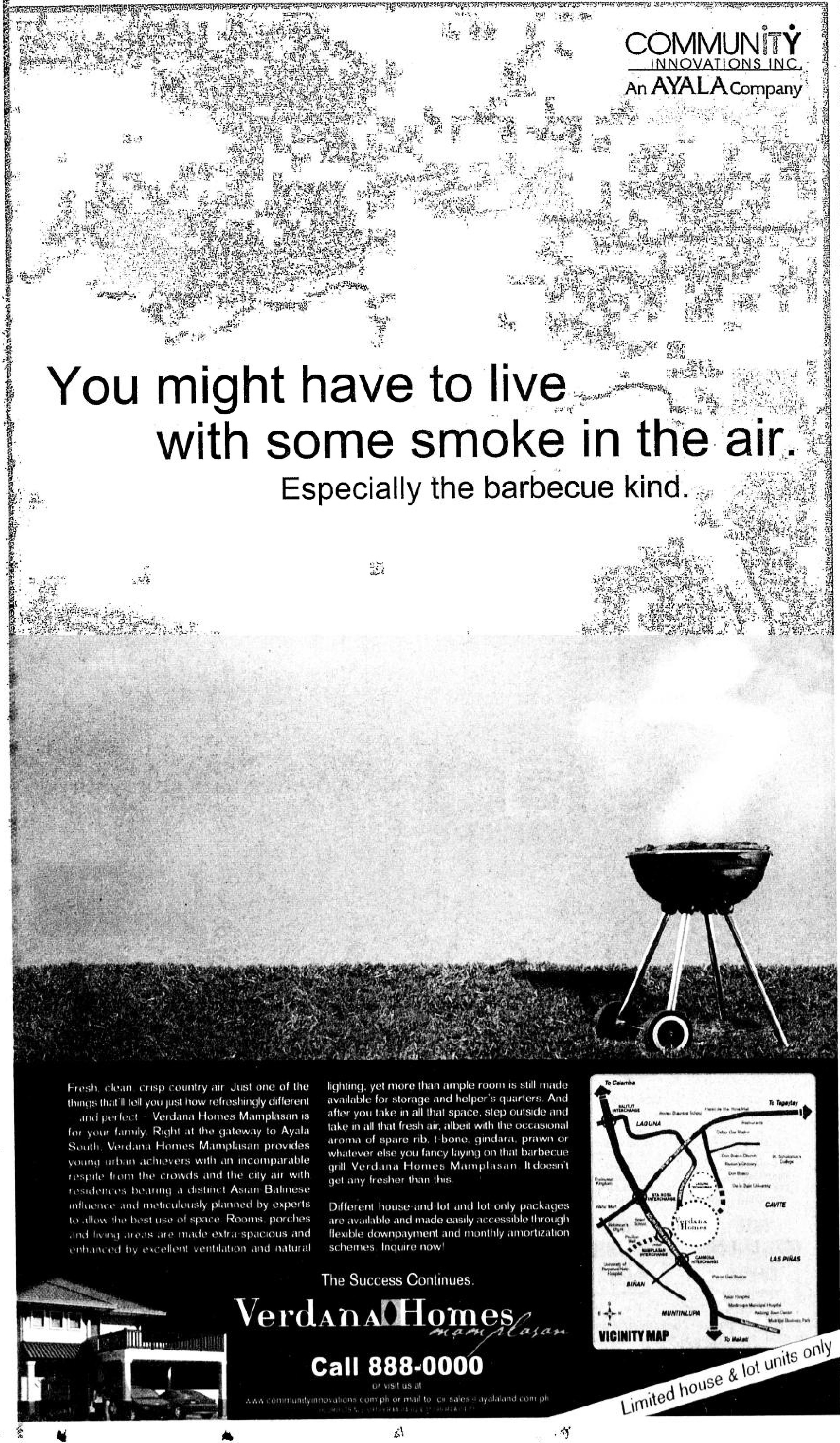
Sherlita Gontinas, the boy's nanny who was with the victim when he was kidnapped, had identified Pagdanganan, San Andres and Domingo as the abductors.

'No longer the village protector'

EVEN before former Multinational Village Homeowners Association president Arnel Gacutan became a suspect in the eyes of authorities and lawmakers, his neighbors already felt he was no longer fit to protect them. Gacutan was booted out of office in their annual association elections last January, using the series of raids on alleged shabu laboratories as their main issue against him.

A resident said yesterday that the homeowners felt it was Gacutan's responsibility to make sure their subdivision was safe from drug syndicates.

A case was also filed against him in the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board for his alleged use of proxy votes in the association's elections, by offering to write off residents' debts to the association in exchange for votes, another source claimed. The HLURB decided that what he did was illegal, but Gacutan refused to yield his post. *Nikko Dizon*



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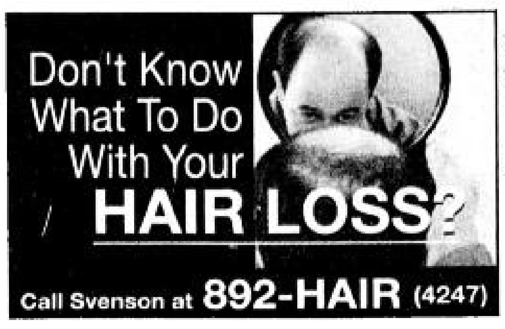
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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

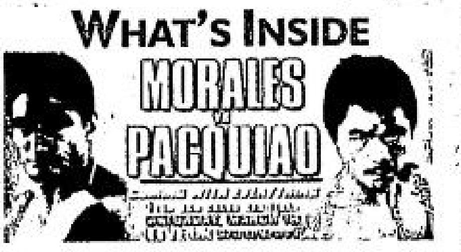
BILLIARDS: San Miguel Asian 9 Ball Tournament; 5 p.m.; STAR Sports—Asia's premier 9-ball tournament kicks off in Singapore.

BASKETBALL: NBA-Pacers vs Nuggets; 9 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports; Pistons vs Suns; 11:30 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); STAR Sports—Former ABA squads Indiana and Denver tangle while defending champion Detroit tries to upend Phoenix.

US NCAA-Miami (Fl) vs Duke; 8 a.m. (r-2 p.m.); Big Ten Wildcard Game; 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (r); ESPN—Check out two college battles from two powerhouse conferences.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

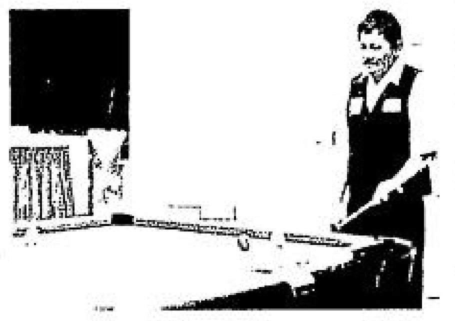
WHAT'S INSIDE



■ 'Manila Ice' plot sure to stop Morales cold /A24

■ Eric back as Coke faces SLR /A25

■ Bittersweet day for LA's Kobe /A27



■ Bata, Django plunge into action today /A28

Southwoods widens PAL lead to 4 over Del Monte

ARTEMIO Murakami lines up putt on No. 14.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

By Musong R. Castillo

BACOLOD—The future, it seems, has arrived.

Southwoods continued to reap the fruits of a massive long-term program with its young guns keeping their pursuers at bay after 36 holes of the Philippine Airlines Interclub golf tournament yesterday.

Former RP Amateur champion Artemio Murakami assembled a one-under-par 69 worth 37 points, leading Southwoods to a 127 Day 2 total at the Marapara course here and 257 overall that boosted its lead over Del Monte to four points.

Louie Dacudao matched Murakami's output and Del Monte got 31 from captain Yoyong Velez as the defending champion totaled 125 for the day and kept the pressure on Southwoods with a 253 aggregate.

Canlubang struggled again and fell 10 points off Southwoods with Jay Bayron's 34 proving as the team's best score again despite sputtering on two holes coming home.

The Sugar Barons, the winningest club here, trailed Del Monte by six going into the important third round at the Binitin course in nearby Murcia town in Negros Occidental today.

"We're in the best position right now, obviously," said Southwoods' team captain, Jeric Hechanova. "The third round will be the most crucial, as we have always looked at Binitin as the course that will decide this tournament."

Southwoods also got 31 points from Laurence Negrido and 30 from veteran Jun Jun Plana. Miko Alejandro's 29 was the last score that counted over Tonlits Asistio's 28.

SOUTHWOODS/ A24

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Rosales chases 2nd title

SWEDE No. 1 Annika Sorenstam will be watching from behind when Jennifer Rosales of the Philippines starts chasing her second straight title Friday (Saturday Manila time) in the $1.2 million Mastercard Classic Bosque Real Country Club in Mexico City, Mexico.

Fresh from winning the season opener last week in the SBS Open in Oahu, Hawaii, Smart endorser Rosales will be in a threesome with Korean hotshots Grace Park and Aree Song in one of the featured pairings in the tournament.

Sorenstam, who recently filed for divorce, makes her season debut playing in the next flight with local favorite Lorena Ochoa and Juli Inkster.

Rosales already has earned more than $214,000 (about P11.7 million) in the last three weeks counting the $150,000 first prize in the SBS Open and $64,734 she and Dorothy Delasin pocketed for placing second in the World Cup in South Africa also last month.

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FIRST GENT FUNDING

Keon: Big budget for shooting, athletics

By Jasmine W. Payo

SHOOTING, with just one gold in the last Southeast Asian Games, and athletics, with a Philippine contingent high of eight, will enjoy the biggest budget for training in this year's SEA Games.

Shooting will receive P7 million while athletics will get P6 million out of the P160 million the First Gentleman Foundation raised to bankroll the athletes' training and foreign stints through the generosity of the country's top businessmen and corporations.

Michael Keon, head of the five-man FG group, said the allocations were approved based on the training programs and budget proposals submitted by the national sports associations.

"If they asked for a higher amount than the specific allocation set by the FG, we will sit down with them," said Keon, who is also the national training director of the Philippine Sports Commission. "We cannot change the allotted amount. The NSAs have to keep within that range."

Two other sports that will receive a big chunk of the funds are taekwondo (P5 million) and boxing (P3 million).

"The budget can only be used for equipment, uniform and international exposure," Keon stressed. "But rather than do this arbitrarily and unilaterally, we will do this together with the NSAs so that we can also get their input."

"But we have to move fast, we aim to finish all these by next week," said Keon, former project director of Gintong Alay in the '80s.

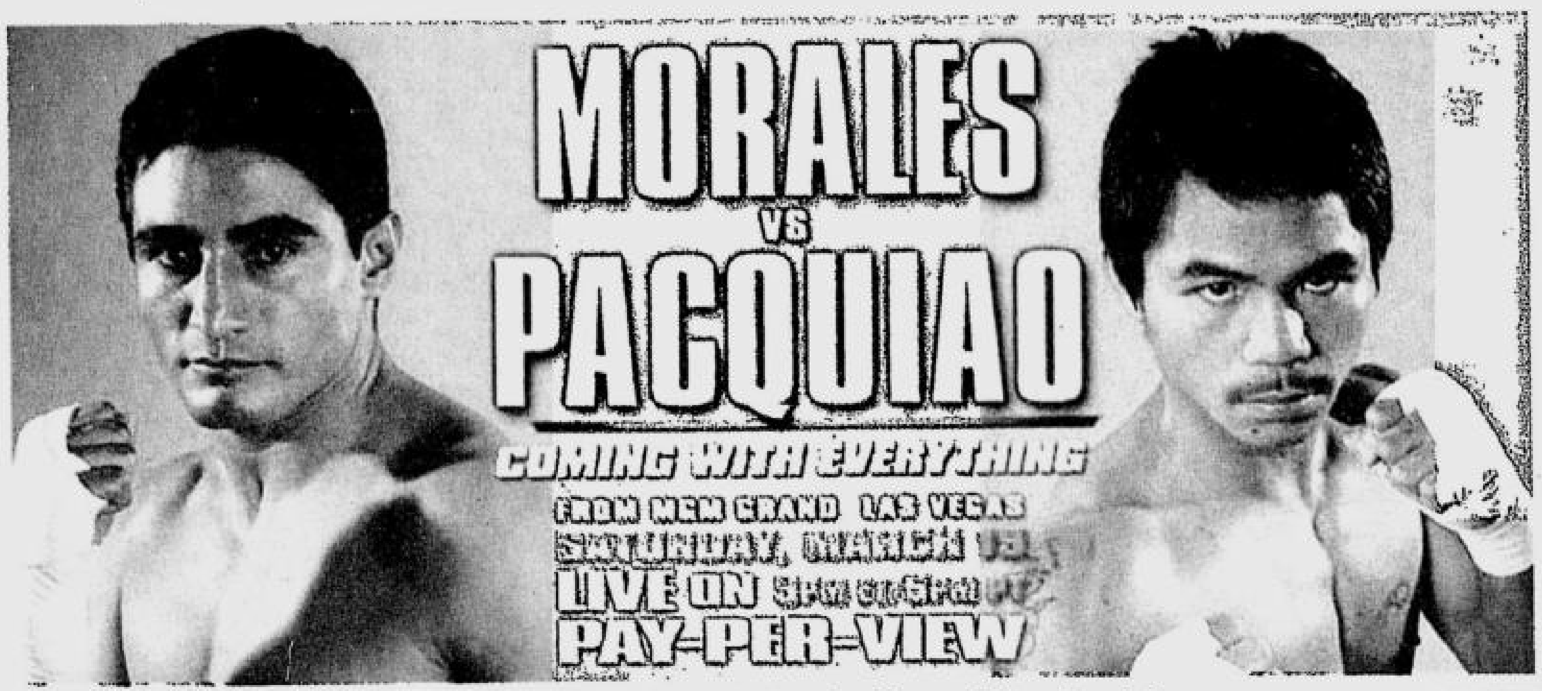
Among the 41 sports competing in the biennial meet, only billiards, chess, football, golf, canoe and kayak, volleyball and lawn tennis have yet to submit their proposed budget.

Shooting, which is headed by presidential brother Art Macapagal, delivered only one gold medal in the Vietnam 2003 SEA Games courtesy of the men's trap shooting team.

Athletics finished with eight golds.

The other members of the Godfather Committee is composed of Philippine Olympic Committee officials Steve Hontiveros and Joey Romasanta, and FG Foundation's Butch Tuason and Tessa Mangahas.

MICHAEL Keon: WE have to move fast.



FIGHT FOR HEARTS: This early, cable giant HBO is drumming up the Pacquiao-Marquez fight on its website. HBO WEBSITE

'Manila Ice' plot sure to stop Morales cold

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

FAMOUS American trainer Freddie Roach has developed a "secret weapon" that he said will be the key to Manny Pacquiao's victory over Erik "El Teribile" Morales on March 19 at the 16,000-capacity MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Dubbed "Manila Ice," Roach said the strategy was perfected "under more secrecy than the Manhattan Project," the United States' 1942 atomic weapons project aimed at stopping the Axis powers' war machine in World War II.

"When Manny unleashes it on March 19, it will stop Morales cold," Roach told Boxing-Central. "Manny may become known as boxing's version of the Enola Gay when he drops this bomb on Morales."

Meanwhile, Morales continued his rigid preparation in the Otomi mountains in Mexico, indicating that he has been training "like old times" and accompanied only by the people closest to him.

Morales traveled to Tolucas region early this week and trained at the tartan tracks of Ciudad Deportiva, where he worked on his speed in a bid to match Pacquiao's agility.

"The duel with Pacquiao will be difficult," Morales admitted. "This fight will be very important. I don't have anything against Pacquiao, but he presents a very important fight for me. I will emerge victorious."

Meanwhile, Pacquiao's campaign against Morales is expected to be supported by his compatriots, who have already booked their appearance at the MGM Grand.

Expected to be at ringside are Games and Amusements Board chair Eric Buhain, who is set to depart on March 17, as well as longtime supporters Moy Lainez, Lito Mondejar, Gerry Garcia and Pacquiao's wife, Jinkee.

Joining them are sportsmen Tony Aldeguer and Wakee Salud, Sen. Lito Lapid, Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson, North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Gen. Santos City Mayor Pedro Acharon and topnotch lawyer Siegfrid Fortun.

Record turnout, PPV take seen for March 19 tiff

MORE than 10,000 tickets have already been sold for the March 19 "Coming with Everything" showdown between Manny Pacquiao and Erik "El Teribile" Morales.

Organizers predict the fight will eclipse the attendance and pay-per-view take of the third Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera showdown last November as Mexican and Filipino fans are expected to snag most of the remaining tickets.

Millions more around the world will tune in to the mega-clash via satellite, organizers said.

"The fight is on fire," said Top Rank's Bob Arum, promoter of the fight.

"These two fighters bring fire and the public recognizes it. We're looking not only for a big number at the MGM gate but also on pay-per-view and closed circuit which will exceed results of Morales vs Barrera."

Arum said all 2,800 tickets at $75 have been purchased. Only the $400 ringside tickets and those for $300, $200 and $125 are available. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Reluctant, if not accidental, hero

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

BACOLOD CITY—Some golfers become mayors, congressmen, governors, senators and even presidents of this republic. Some became golfers after they got themselves elected into public office, like President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But Carlo Gamban is different. A golfer to the core, he became mayor after trying his best not to become one.

"He was a reluctant mayor," said a friend close to Carlo. "Never in his wildest dreams did Carlo think of becoming mayor."

From the day he finished schooling at La Salle where he was a basketball star in the Sixties, Carlo Gamban was never known to be a political animal. He has admitted a million times he'd never enter politics.

So how come he's now mayor of Silay, the booming city just a par-3 away from this bustling metropolis by the sea?

It so happened that Carlo's cousin had exhausted his three-term quota as mayor of Silay City. Carlo had been asked to run because of his fabled managerial expertise in running a corporation in Manila for nearly three decades.

"In the beginning, Carlo vehemently refused," my friend said. "But in the end, his relatives would prevail over him."

The irony is that after one term, Carlo Gamban had been asked not to seek re-election.

He refused.

"I couldn't leave the post just like that as I had ongoing projects." Carlo said to me during the birthday party of Art Ledesma on Feb. 28 at the famous Empire Lounge along Lacson Avenue. "I just couldn't turn my back on my constituents. That'd be tantamount to betraying them."

His decision to run again sparked a family spat that would soon escalate into a full-blown squabble. His first cousin, the former mayor, became his main foe last May in a bitter battle that became the talk of the town. As a result, they are not in speaking terms up to now.

Typically Filipino.

Always, everybody seems to want to be the leader in this country that losers are usually not man enough to accept defeat.

It happens almost elsewhere, even overseas.

We see Filipinos tangling—in club/association elections or otherwise—and after the exercise, you'll see the beaten faction storming out of the club/association. Sportsmanship is simply not in their vocabulary.

Look, we used to see only a Chinatown in any city in the world.

Not anymore. Today, there's a proliferation of Koreantowns worldwide.

In New York City, aside from its cute Little Italy, a Vietnamtown is slowly emerging to be a power player near New York's Chinatown.

Anyway, after winning a second term last May, Carlo Gamban embarked on his frenetic mission to concretize the plans and projects he had started in his first three years in office.

Already, he has installed electricity to 80 percent of the rural areas in Silay, including the city's mountain barrios.

On record, Carlo Gamban is the only mayor who buys the garbage of every resident, making Silay one of the cleanest in the country.

In far-flung areas where residents still move around barefoot, Carlo Gamban has provided free school buses for elementary as well as high school students. I have yet to see a mayor implement such a project, with the city budget not involved in it.

"I have patrons and supporters helping me with my projects and I couldn't thank them enough," Carlo said.

And take this: In 2007, the Bacolod International Airport will open in Silay. With groundbreaking ceremonies held only last December, the huge 180-hectare airport is envisioned to become one of the country's most modern.

That and several more projects like a foreign-assisted scheme that would generate massive employment opportunities for Silay residents have endeared Carlo Gamban no end to both the masses and high-heeled city folk alike.

"Silay is 90 percent agricultural (sugar plantations), but with the way things are shaping up, my city might soon hit progressive levels for the benefit of the people," said Carlo. "I guess I'm a lucky guy."

For getting himself thrust into his position as mayor of Silay, I now prefer to call him the accidental hero.

Still, despite his hectic schedule as mayor, Carlo Gamban, whose father was originally from Batangas and who married into the prominent Gamboas of Silay, has not forgotten his other love next to governance: golf.

In fact, he was one of the stars when Luisita won a record sixth straight PAL Seniors Interclub title on Feb. 27 at NOGCC.

"You remove golf from me and I'm like a fish thrown to dry land," Carlo said.

Who said cockroaches are the last to disappear from the face of the earth on doomsday?

I say it'd be the golfers.

Southwoods pads PAL lead

From page A23

"Four points is not so bad," said Velez. "We're still in it, though Binitin could very well decide things."

Paul Miñoza salvaged a 30 and Ben Miñoza a 27. Tristan Tabanas' 25 did not count for Del Monte.

Murakami actually opened with birdies on three of his first four holes.

But as the unpredictable bounces on Marapara's hard, sun-baked fairways bedeviled the field, Murakami and Dacudao had to scramble to keep their scores down.

"It was tough out there," Murakami said. "The heat hardened the fairways so much that you'll never really know what you are going to get."

Bayron found the greenside bunker on the 16th for bogey and had to pick up on the next hole after hooking his drive and failing to get out of the trees.

He birdied the 18th from eight feet, though, and helped save Canlubang from what could have been a truly terrible day.

JR Tanpinco, whose clubs were reported lost on the eve of the second round, failed to take advantage of his familiarity with the course to shoot a 31. Jun Bernis assembled a 30 and either of Matthew Manotoc or Ronnie Torrecampo's 28 counted for Canlubang.

"We have to make our move tomorrow," said Canlubang non-playing skipper Luigi Yulo, who may field his strongest team possible for the third round.

"It we don't make a move, that's it. It's going to be over."

Meanwhile, Negros bounced back with a 119 at Binitin and took the lead in the Founders Division with a 237 total. Cebu, the overnight leader, slumped with a 111 to trail by one at 238.

Robert Malaga scored 34, Jose Mari Ballesteros turned in 30, Justin Limjap 28 and Federico Locsin a 27 to make up the Negros card.

Cebu got 30 points each from Montito Garcia and Eric Deen and 27 from Mark Dy. One of the 24 of Marco Sarmiento and Nonoy Tirol counted.

Iligan pooled a second-round 111 to go with its 104 on Wednesday, zooming to the top of Sportswriters play with a 215 tally, eight ahead of Iloilo (110-207), with Pamplona managing only a 96 for a 201.

Paul Mendez, Fely Mendez, Daryl Patrimonio and Roy Quimia combined for 93 points to boost Victorias to the top of the Friendship Division with 170 points.

Stanford pooled a 91 and was in second at 167, while first-round leader Bacolod slumped to a 77 and dropped to third at 165.

Pagcor, ABS-CBN International, Airbus, GE Aircraft Engines, Boeing, Mastercard International, Globe Platinum, Joey 92.3, Royal Caribbean International, Golden Nuggets Hotel and People Asia are the major sponsors of the annual tournament.

Fortune Tobacco, Radio Mindanao Network, Premier Wine and Spirits, Star Cruises and 96.3 WRock are the corporate backers with RJ Broadcasting Network, Century Park Hotel, Asia Brewery Inc., INQ7.net, Tanduay Rhum and Air Philippines the minor sponsors.

The scores:

Championship—257-Southwoods (130-127), 253-Del Monte (128-125), 247- Canlubang (124-123), 218-Wack Wack (115-103), 205-Villamor (114-91), 187-Leyte (88-99), 130-Brookside (90-40), 129-Cotabato (46-90), 109-Mabuhay (46-60), 86 -JFGA Tokyo (39-47).

Founders—237-Negros (118-119), 236-Cebu (125-111), 233-Riviera (121-112), 216-Valley (119-97), 213-Forest Hills (108-105).

Sportswriters—215-Iligan (104-111). 207-Iloilo (97-110), 201-Pamplona (105-96). 196- Sta. Elena (97-99), 189-Palos Verdes (98-91).

Friendship—170-Victorias (77-93), 167-Standord (76-91), 165-Bacolod (88-77), 152-SFO Crystal (75-77), 151-UP Tee Jots (72-79)

DHL-Nat'l Am golf a qualifier for SEAG

EXPECT a spirited battle for top honors in the DHL-WWWExpress National Amateur Golf Championships with the 10th staging of the event to serve as one of the basis for the selection of the national team members to the Southeast Asian Games late this year.

Jun Bernis, the most dominant player last year with three victories, including this one and the national amateur championship, heads the talent-laden roster that includes Juvic Pagunsan, Michael Bibat, Artemio Murakami, Erwin Vinluan, Marvin Dumandan, Hanson So, Jr. and Tonlits Asistio.

The four-day event fires off March 8 at the north course of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna and although the home bets, led by Bernis and Pagunsan, enjoy the so-called local knowledge of the par-72 layout, the rest of the pack is expected to go flat out to contend for the title and a berth in SEA Games squad.

Golf, which was not played in the last SEA Games in Vietnam but has been the country's gold medal source in past SEAG stagings, will make a return this year.

The ladies squad is fancied to be spearheaded by Jayvie Agojo, the country's hottest player.

The deadline for submission of entries is set tomorrow at 12 noon. Entry fee is pegged at P2,500 for men and P2,000 for ladies. For details, call NGAP at 525-6987 or 524-5160 and Cangolf at (049) 549-1363.

Biggest Active chess tilt under way in Tanauan

THE COUNTRY'S biggest Active Chess tournament blasts off at 9 a.m. today at the Speaker Jose Laurel Memorial Gymnasium in Tanauan City.

With a cash pot of P200,000, the two-day 1st Tanauan Chess Open-Mayor's Cup promises to be an exciting clash of the best chess minds in the country.

"We enjoin chess supporters all over the country to be part of this momentous event and partake of the city's hospitality," said Tanauan Mayor Alfredo Corona.

The champion will receive P100,000 plus trophy, with the second placer getting P40,000; third, P20,000; fourth, P10,000; fifth, P5,000; 6th-10th, P2,000 each; and 11th-20th, P1,000 each.

The top performers in the Under-2000, Under-1800, Under-1600 rating categories and the top lady and top kiddie performers will win P1,000 each.

Eric back as Coke faces SLR

AFTER asking for a trade, Don Allado (center) finally inked an extension with the Alaska Aces. PDI PHOTO

Games Today
4:30 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Sta. Lucia
7:20 p.m.—San Miguel vs Alaska

AMID the hoopla surrounding the national team and the mystery shrouding giant imports, new Coca-Cola coach Eric Altamirano has found the perfect low-key situation to make his Philippine Basketball Association comeback.

"I like it better this way," said the two-time champion coach. "I prefer working in a situation where I can just do my job instead of having to deal with the distractions that usually accompany comebacks."

Altamirano last coached in the league in the 2002 All-Filipino Cup with Purefoods, before he was called to serve the national team to the Busan Asian Games. After being part of the heartbreak team that came to within seconds of a championship duel against China, Altamirano returned to find Ryan Gregorio already warmed to the Hotdogs coaching post.

After two years as point man of San Miguel's touring goodwill basketball team, Altamirano returns to coach Coca-Cola in the opening game of the Fiesta Conference, where the Tigers take on Sta. Lucia at 4:30 p.m. at the Philsports in Pasig.

While Altamirano will be operating under the radar, the four imports who will make their debuts today will be put under the microscope with the first few weeks of the tournament serving as the audition period for the reinforcements.

"I think all the teams will be monitoring their imports," Altamirano admitted. "What happened was almost every team took on the best talent readily available. But, they still have names in their minds that they are going after."

For Coca-Cola, the reinforcement will be Virgin Islands native Jaja Richards, who basketball scouts describe as a tireless worker underneath the boards. The 6-11 Richards has had his share of overseas action, having toured leagues in China, Russia, Italy, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

Sta. Lucia tapped Richard Jeter to replace original pick Nate Williams, who reportedly flunked a medical test by the Games and Amusements board.

San Miguel, which takes on Alaska in the 7:20 p.m. nightcap, will suit up 6-foot-9 Chris Burgess, one of the imports who carry sparkling credentials.

"He is not flashy but a hard worker who can get the rebounds we need," said San Miguel coach Jong Uichico of Burgess, a 6-foot-9 former Duke Blue Devil.

Burgess will be tested against Alaska's Leon Derricks, who will fortify a frontline that has shook off trade talks—at least, temporarily—after Don Allado, who asked to be traded in the offseason, inked a one-and-a-half year extension with the Aces. Derricks, Allado, and the vastly improved Reynel Hugnatan will serve as coach Tim Cone's main men in the post.

RP unfazed despite Indonesians' show of might

By Roy Luarca

GAMES TODAY (*San Carlos Gym*)
5 p.m.—Chinese Taipei vs Tonga
7 p.m.—Macau vs Indonesia

CEBU CITY—Formidable but beatable.

An expert observer gave this assessment after watching the Indonesians trounce the Tongans, 25-15, 25-19, 25-14, Wednesday night at the start of the Men's Volleyball World Championship Asia Pool C qualifying at the University of San Carlos Gym here.

"*May pag-asa tayo* (We have a chance)," said Tats Suzara, former secretary general of the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association and FIVB representative.

His optimism was also boosted after the Filipinos smashed a raw Macau side, 25-13, 25-17, 25-19, in the opener of the five-nation tournament that will produce two qualifiers for the second round of the worldwide eliminations.

As the reigning Southeast Asian Games titlists, the Indons are the Filipinos' main concern in the weeklong meet.

And with five holdovers from that champion team, the Indons appear stronger than the Filipinos who will try to better their fourth place finish in the 2002 Vietnam edition of the biennial meet.

Indonesia's Chinese coach Qiujiang Li said he could have easily put up a stronger squad for the Manila SEAG due to the presence of a semi-pro volleyball league in Jakarta.

"We have the most experienced players and some very good youngsters," said Li, who steered Indonesia to its sixth volleyball title in Hanoi. "But we have to participate in the world championship to improve our level of play further."

Despite their SEAG supremacy, the Indons are unranked in the FIVB, the sport's governing body. In contrast, Chinese Taipei is rated 36th in men's play.

The Filipinos are tackling the favored Taiwanese at presstime Thursday.

Earlier, Macau bested Tonga in three hard fought sets that lasted an hour and 12 minutes, 29-17, 25-20, 25-21.

With six players standing 6-feet-4 and above, the Taiwanese are expected to advance along with the Indons, whose average ceiling is 6-foot-1.

Drawing a combined 24 hits from Rizqon Aris Achmad anf Nyoman R Rudi Tirtana, the Indons spent just 55 minutes to subdue the Tongans, whose main passion is rugby and soccer.

With so many potential Nationals back home, Indon assistant coach Gustaman Gugi said their federation will still conduct tryouts specifically for the SEAG.

The Philippines takes a bye Friday before meeting Indonesia Saturday.

Sponsored primarily by the Philippine Sports Commission, the tournament, which drew more than 4,000 fans Friday, is being backed by Bacchus Energy Drink, PCSO, Cebu Visitors and Convention Bureau, Sogo Hotel, Trapik.com, Air Philippines, Speed Magazine, Pepsi, Gatorade and White Beauty Phils.

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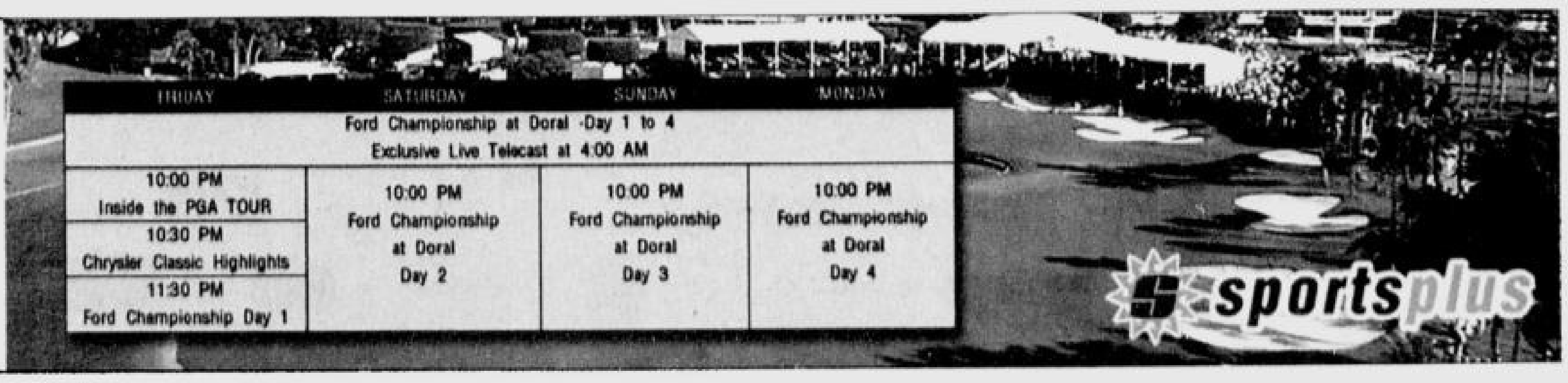

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Ford Championship at Doral -Day 1 to 4 Exclusive Live Telecast at 4:00 AM			
10:00 PM Inside the PGA TOUR 10:30 PM Chrysler Classic Highlights 11:30 PM Ford Championship Day 1	10:00 PM Ford Championship at Doral Day 2	10:00 PM Ford Championship at Doral Day 3	10:00 PM Ford Championship at Doral Day 4

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Serena enters quarterfinals

SERENA Williams reacts after losing a shot to her Russian opponent Elena Bovina. AFP

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Leading seeds Lindsay Davenport, Serena Williams and Anastasia Myskina won second-round matches on Wednesday and reached the Dubai Women's Open quarterfinals.

World No. 1 Davenport defeated China's Jie Zheng, 6-2, 7-5, while Australian Open champion Williams survived an early scare to beat Russia's Elena Bovina, 1-6, 6-1, 6-4.

French Open champion and No. 3-seeded Myskina advance when Marion Bartoli of France retired with left knee tendinitis while trailing, 4-2.

Davenport's quarterfinal opponent on Thursday will be another former Wimbledon champion, Conchita Martinez, who ousted seventh-seeded Nathalie Dechy of France, 6-1, 6-2.

Williams will meet Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia, who beat Elena Likhovtseva of Russia, 7-5, 6-4, and Myskina faces eighth-seeded Patty Schnyder of Switzerland, who downed Li Na of China, 6-3, 7-6 (8).

The other quarterfinal pits wild card Sania Mirza of India against Jelena Jankovic of Serbia and Montenegro, who both won on Tuesday.

Davenport won the last four games to vanquish Jie, a qualifier.

"I started well and finished well, but played some so-so games in the middle," said Davenport, who had a first-round bye.

She has reached the final of her last two events, the Tokyo Indoors last month, and the Australian Open in January, when she crushed Martinez in the first round to level their head-to-head record at 8.

Williams, making her first tour appearance since a stomach illness forced her to withdrew before the Paris Indoor quarterfinals last month, lost the opening five games to Bovina and the first set 6-1, raising fears she would follow sister Venus out of the tournament.

But Serena Williams unleashed booming serves and zippy groundstrokes to take the next two sets and win in 88 minutes.

"I don't know what I was doing there tonight," she said. "I think I was trying to kill myself out there." *AP*

SAN ANTONIO hotshot Manu Ginobili drives through the Toronto defense for an easy lay-up.

Hewitt hopes to put pressure early on Davis Cup opponents

SYDNEY, Australia—Lleyton Hewitt plans to put early pressure on the visiting Austrians and give Australia the advantage in its Davis Cup World Group first-rounder beginning Friday.

Second-ranked Hewitt was drawn to meet world 144th ranked Alexander Peya in one opening singles rubber on grass at the Sydney International Tennis Center, the 2000 Olympic venue.

Wayne Arthurs, who won his first career singles title last week at Scottsdale, Arizona, will take on Austrian No. 1 Jurgen Melzer, ranked 34th in the world, in the second singles match.

"Hopefully I can go out there and give the boys a 1-nil start and put the pressure on Melzer," Hewitt said Thursday.

"Melzer knows he's going to have an extremely tough match anyway, but if they're 1-love down, it's a bit of a must-win for him," he said.

Hewitt said he was surprised to be playing Peya and not the more experienced Julian Knowle, who has been relegated to doubles only.

LLEYTON Hewitt hopes to win big against Alexander Peya and put early pressure on Austria in their Davis Cup second round battle. AP

"I saw him (Peya) play a couple of matches at Wimbledon last year," said Hewitt. "He ended up losing to Roddick in the third round. He pushed Roddick a bit in that match, so he can play on grass. He's a dangerous player."

Arthurs beat Melzer in straight-set tiebreakers last month in Memphis. Melzer said he wouldn't feel any extra pressure.

"At the end, we need three points," said Melzer. "It doesn't matter how we get them. My match isn't more important than Alex's against Lleyton."

Arthurs will team with veteran Todd Woodbridge against the Austrian pair of Julian Knowle and Peya on Saturday ahead of Sunday's reverse singles.

The last time the countries met at Vienna in 1989, on an indoor clay court laid over carpet, the home side won 5-0.

Current Austrian captain Thomas Muster led his side to victory in that match over a team which included Australia's current captain John Fitzgerald and coach Wally Masur.

Australia last won the Davis Cup in 2003.

Hewitt is coming off a long break prompted by a draining Australian open campaign, where he lost to Russian sensation Marat Safin in the finals. *AP*

CHEEKS: Players liked him.

Blazers fire Cheeks league fines Arenas

PORTLAND, Oregon—Maurice Cheeks was fired on Wednesday as coach of the Portland Trail Blazers, who have dropped seven of nine games and are in danger of missing the NBA playoffs for the second straight year.

Kevin Pritchard, the team's director of player personnel, was appointed interim head coach, general manager John Nash said at a news conference.

Cheeks, near the end of a four-year contract estimated at $12 million, was popular among the players and fans. But when the losses mounted this season, he was believed to be on the way out.

Portland's latest defeat was on Tuesday, 103-93 to the defending champion Detroit Pistons. The Blazers (22-33) are in 12th place in the Western Conference, six games behind the Los Angeles ers for the eighth and final pla spot. Cheeks leaves the Blazers a 162-139 career record.

Meanwhile, in Washington, ards point guard Gilbert Arenas fined $7,500 by the NBA for crit ing the referees following his te loss to Sacramento.

Arenas was called for a fou Cuttino Mobley drove the lane 1.5 seconds to play, resulting in free throws that decided the gan 110-108 victory by the Kings on day. Arenas scored 43 points but upset he had just seven free throw

"I don't understand it so times," Arenas said. "I prob drive the lane as strong as anyb in the league, and I don't get same calls anybody gets, like (Allen) Iverson, who can shoo free throws a night.

"Because he's little, he gets he added. "Because I'm bi when I get hit, they don't do thing with it. Last night, I sh have shot 20-something throws; tonight I should have 20-something free throws. B guess I've got to get more yea the league to get that call."

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Bittersweet day for LA's Kobe

Lakers star finally settles rape case

DENVER—Kobe Bryant and the 20-year-old woman who accused him of rape nearly two years ago settled her civil lawsuit against him, ending a sordid case that tarnished one of the NBA's brightest young stars.

Terms were not released. A statement faxed Wednesday to The Associated Press by Bryant's attorneys said only that the matter had been resolved "to the satisfaction of both parties."

"The parties and their attorneys have agreed that no further comments about the matter can or will be made," the statement said. A motion for dismissal stipulating that the case can never be refiled was filed simultaneously in Denver federal court.

Bryant was in Boston for a game against the Celtics, where he scored 26 points in a loss.

Asked about the settlement after the game, Bryant asked, "Anybody with basketball questions, gentlemen?"

The agreement probably spells out financial penalties for revealing any details, said Steve Cron, a Los Angeles attorney familiar with celebrity cases.

"It's in both parties' interests to have this remain confidential," he said. "That's one of the incentives for them to settle: He didn't have to do a deposition, the lurid details wouldn't be posted on some website. She didn't have to face the rigors of having a deposition by his lawyers and she'll gain some privacy as well."

Bryant, a 27-year-old married father of one, has apologized for his "behavior that night and for the consequences she has suffered," while insisting the sex was consensual.

The lawsuit was similar to the criminal case, accusing Bryant of flirting with the woman during a tour of the Lodge & Spa at Cordillera. After the two ended up in his room, they began to kiss and Bryant became more aggressive, finally holding her by the throat while he raped her, the lawsuit said. *AP*

KOBE Bryant's fortunes take different paths in different courts. REUTERS

Celtics ruin celebration, muzzle Bryant in last period to forge victory

BOSTON—Kobe Bryant's problems have moved back to the basketball court. Just 30 minutes after settling a lawsuit filed by the woman who accused him of rape, Bryant scored 17 first-quarter points against Boston. But he was scoreless in the fourth quarter—missing a 3-pointer just before the buzzer—as the Celtics beat Los Angeles 104-101 to send the Lakers to their fourth consecutive loss.

Paul Pierce had 29 points and nine rebounds, Ricky Davis scored 29 points and Antoine Walker had 16 with 13 rebounds in his first game in Boston since being reacquired at the trading deadline. The rejuvenated Celtics have won three straight since then and six straight at home overall.

"This is the great thing about this team, that I love," Walker said. "I don't necessarily have to score 25 points for us to win."

Chucky Atkins had 29 points, scoring 14 in the final 5:26 to keep the Lakers in the game and Bryant finished with 26, making nine of 24 shots—0-for-6 in the fourth, when he complained of a sore right ankle.

"If it was bothering him a lot, I am sure he would have asked out," Lakers coach Frank Hamblen said. "But he is a tough guy. He is not going to ask out in many situations."

In Philadelphia, Vince Carter scored 26 of his 32 points in the second half, and Clifford Robinson added 18 points to lead the Nets to a 99-93 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Allen Iverson scored 37 points for Philadelphia, and Chris Webber had only 10 in his worst performance in three games for the 76ers. Philadelphia has lost three of four since acquiring Webber from Sacramento last week.

The Nets have won three straight to close within 1½ games of second-place Philadelphia in the Atlantic Division.

In Cleveland, Ray Allen scored 31 points, Vladimir Radmanovic hit five triples and the Seattle SuperSonics spoiled Dan Gilbert's first game as the Cavaliers' owner with a 103-86 rout.

Allen made three three-pointers and the surprising Sonics, one of the NBA's best outside shooting teams, went 10-of-17 from behind the arc to win their 40th game this season and improve to 5-1—4-1 on the road—since the All-Star break.

Rashard Lewis added 20 points for the Sonics. LeBron James scored 32 points, matching a career high with five 3-pointers for Cleveland.

In Washington, Larry Hughes made an emphatic and timely return, scoring 31 points in his first game since breaking his thumb to lead the Wizards past the Houston Rockets, 101-98.

Hughes made 11 of 20 shots and had six rebounds and four assists, and backcourt partner Gilbert Arenas had 33 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

In Orlando, Florida, Steve Francis had 29 points and 10 assists to help the Magic nip the Sacramento Kings, 114-111, and snap a three-game losing streak.

Dwight Howard added 20 points and 16 rebounds for the Magic, Grant Hill had 20 points, and rookie Jameer Nelson had 19 points and six assists.

In Minneapolis, Derek Fisher had 23 points and nine assists to lead the Golden State Warriors over the Minnesota Timberwolves, 99-93, for its sixth road victory of the season.

After trailing by as many as 11 points in the third quarter, the Warriors opened the fourth with a 16-2 run to snap a three-game losing streak.

In San Antonio, Manu Ginobili scored 17 points, and Tony Parker added 15 to lead the Spurs past the Toronto Raptors, 92-86, and help the NBA-leading team improve to 44-13 overall and 25-2 at the SBC Center.

Chris Bosh led Toronto with 16 points.

In Salt Lake City, Utah, Mehmet Okur scored 19 points to help the Jazz crush the Atlanta Hawks, 96-74, for their first three-game winning streak since the opening week of the season.

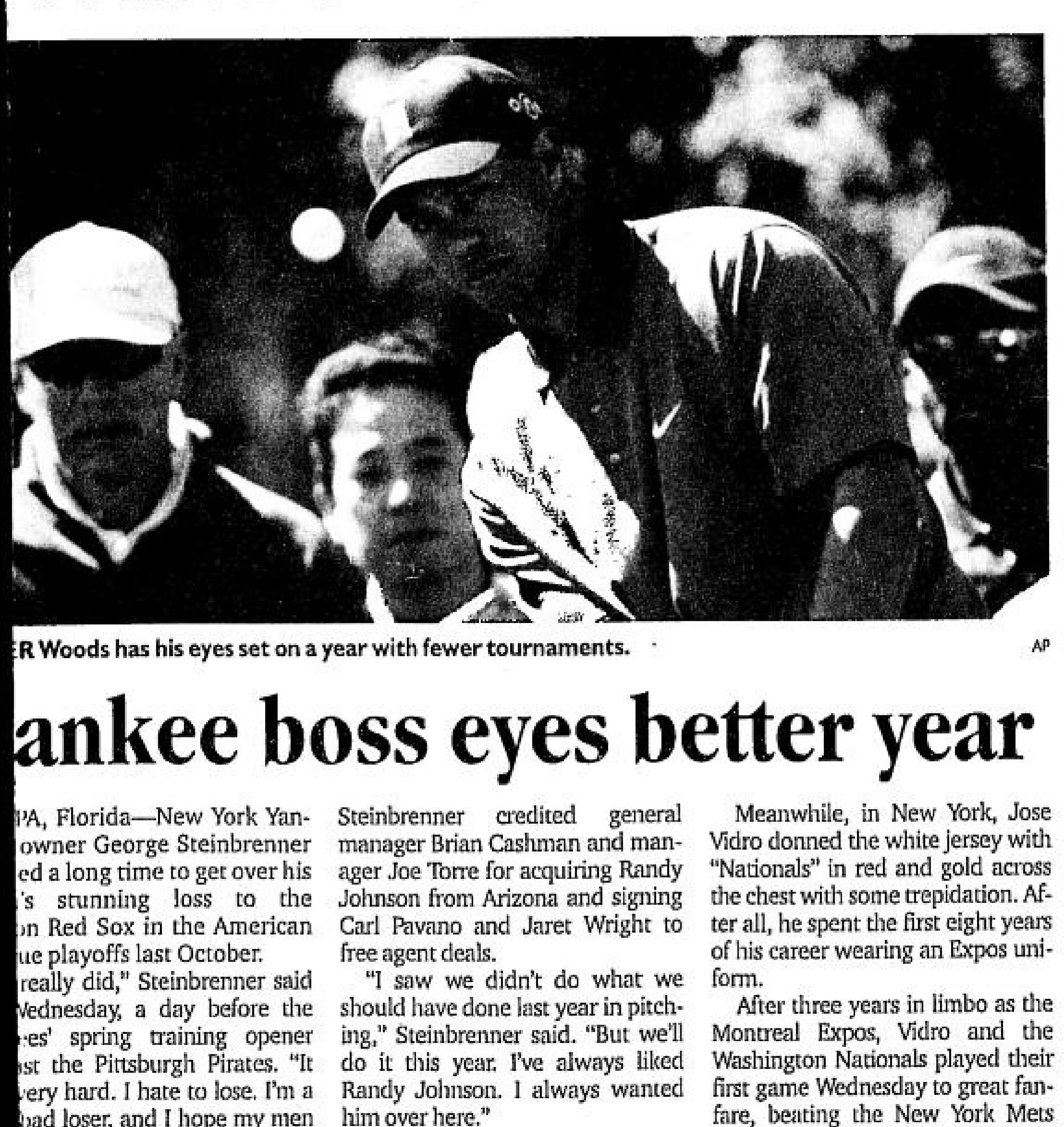
Josh Childress led Atlanta with 21 points. The Hawks, playing the final game of a seven-game road trip, have lost 10 in a row overall and 21 straight on the road.

In New Orleans, Dan Dickau scored 18 points, Lee Nailon added 14, and PJ Brown had 12 points and 15 rebounds to lead the Hornets past the Charlotte Bobcats, 94-85.

Emeka Okafor led the Bobcats with 18 points.

In Los Angeles, Corey Maggette scored 34 points to help the Clippers win their seventh straight home game, 101-92, and end Dallas' road winning streak at six games. *AP*

oods: PGA Tour needs shorter golf season


R Woods has his eyes set on a year with fewer tournaments. AP

MIAMI—With Tiger Woods on one side of the course, Phil Mickelson on the other and Vijay Singh bringing up the rear of the practice round for the Ford Championship, some of the top players in the game took the opportunity Wednesday to lobby for a shorter PGA Tour season.

Eleven of the world's top 12 players have gathered at the Doral Golf Resort for this weekend's event, something Woods said would be more common if the US tour cut a few months off its schedule.

"It would be more exciting for the fans, and I'm sure the sponsors and TV and everybody if we did play more often together," Woods said. "The only way you could do that is if we shortened the season."

It's not that simple, although a revamped PGA Tour schedule again is under review.

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem is studying five models of when to play, where to play, even how much to play in the United States, all of it geared toward negotiations at the end of a year for a new television contract.

"It's time to take a look at a number of parts of the schedule, to see if we can make it more compelling," Finchem said in an interview last week. "Length of schedule is one; where different tournaments are played is another; and where we play tournaments is a third."

Finchem did not offer specifics, and it could be that nothing changes.

But Woods and Masters champion Phil Mickelson have been the strongest proponents of shortening a schedule that begins in January and doesn't end until the first week of November.

"We have an 11-month season, and that's too long," Woods said. "There's no other sport that plays 11 months of the year. I think we should end (in September)."

Mickelson considered the schedules of top players over the past 40 years.

Jack Nicklaus rarely played more than 20 events. Tom Watson never played more than 24 during his prime. Woods has never played more than 21 going into his 10th full season. Mickelson played a career-high 26 tour events in 2002, but his new model is to play hard through the four majors, then effectively shut it down.

Woods, Mickelson, Singh and Ernie Els played in the same tournament only eight times last year, four of those majors.

"Most of the top players throughout history have averaged 18 to 22 events a year, and we seem to have 44-plus events," Mickelson said. *AP*

ankee boss eyes better year

PA, Florida—New York Yan- owner George Steinbrenner ed a long time to get over his 's stunning loss to the on Red Sox in the American ue playoffs last October.

really did," Steinbrenner said Vednesday, a day before the es' spring training opener st the Pittsburgh Pirates. "It ery hard. I hate to lose. I'm a bad loser, and I hope my men he same way this year. (I) just we get out there and get the one."

e Boss said Boston "deserves e credit" for its victory, and stated he has no problem the Red Sox handing out their Series rings before the Fen- Park opener against the Yan- n April.

hey can give their rings out me they want to," Steinbren- id. "They deserve it."

e Yankees offseason emphasis on improving the rotation. Steinbrenner credited general manager Brian Cashman and manager Joe Torre for acquiring Randy Johnson from Arizona and signing Carl Pavano and Jaret Wright to free agent deals.

"I saw we didn't do what we should have done last year in pitching," Steinbrenner said. "But we'll do it this year. I've always liked Randy Johnson. I always wanted him over here."

The Yankees haven't won the World Series since 2000.

"It's an exciting time for the team, an exciting time for everybody connected with it," Steinbrenner said. "I'm looking forward to seeing all the guys play again. I'm looking forward to getting back on track and going after what we knew we should have done last year."

Torre is entering his 10th season as New York's manager. Steinbrenner said he never thought anyone would last that long on the Yankees bench.

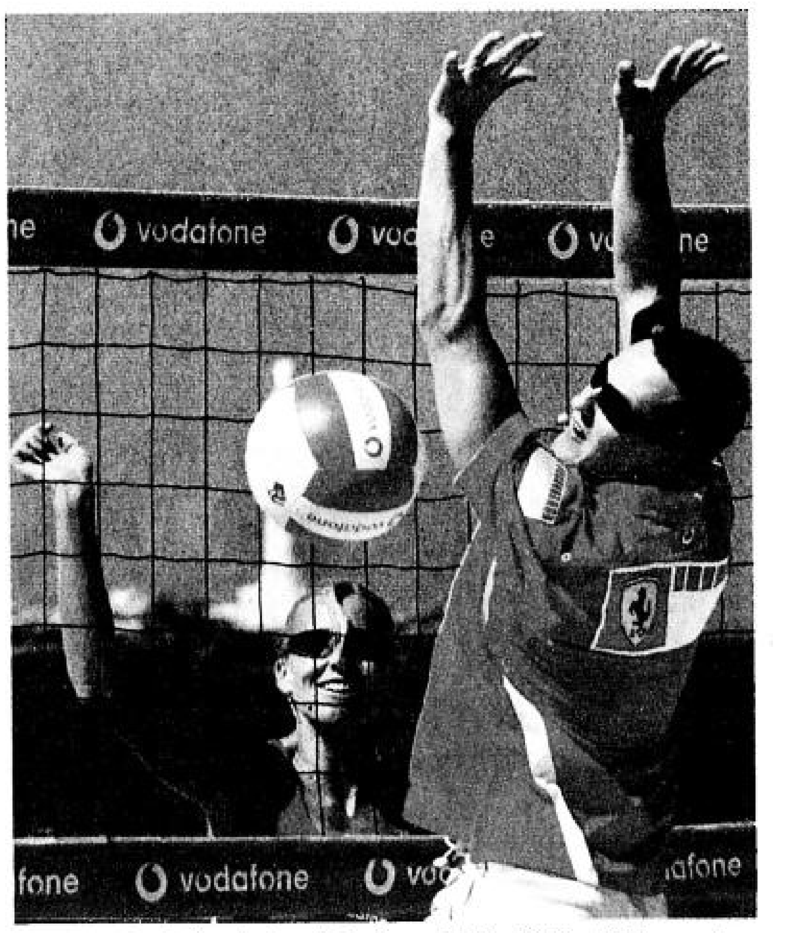
Meanwhile, in New York, Jose Vidro donned the white jersey with "Nationals" in red and gold across the chest with some trepidation. After all, he spent the first eight years of his career wearing an Expos uniform.

After three years in limbo as the Montreal Expos, Vidro and the Washington Nationals played their first game Wednesday to great fanfare, beating the New York Mets and their new manager Willie Randolph 5-3 at Viera, Florida.

"It did feel good once I put it on," Vidro said. "And when I went out there, the people were cheering for us once the game started."

Fans lined up at the stadium gates several dozen deep 1½ hours before the first pitch, there was a half-mile traffic jam—after the game had started—and every seat was sold out.

"It was special because of the situation," Nationals manager Frank Robinson said. *AP*



LIFE is both a ball and a beach for Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher (right), who can afford to relax by playing a game of beach volleyball with Australia's national women's beach volleyball team with still a few days left before the season-opening Melbourne Grand Prix. REUTERS

Indian draws raves from racing's best

MELBOURNE, Australia—Seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher has watched Narain Karthikeyan in testing and thinks the 28-year-old Indian driver will handle the rigors of Formula One.

Australia's Mark Webber, who knows what it's like to have the attention of a nation on his every drive, said Karthikeyan would make the most of his opportunities on his debut in this weekend's Australian Grand Prix.

Karthikeyan happily accepts the endorsements of new peers—what he's a little more concerned about is how his first drive in F1 will be rated along the length and breadth of India.

"Obviously I'm excited—it's my first Grand Prix, I'm the first Indian in Formula One, so there'll be a lot of eyes watching," Karthikeyan told a news conference on Thursday. "In India, they're very happy for us, there's a lot of support back home." *AP*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Tierro, Arcilla lead Davis Cup drive

By Dennis U. Eroa
Inquirer Libre Sports Editor

ELIZALDE (right) picks from a Davis Cup replica held by Overberg the protagonists in the first two singles, as Andrada (left) and Ramirez look on.

ERIK ARAZAS

ALL EYES will be on Patrick John Tierro when he tries to give the Philippines a head start against tough South Korea today in the Asia-Oceania Zone Group II Davis Cup tie at the Philippine Columbian Association courts at Plaza Dilao in Paco, Manila.

The 19-year-old six-footer gets his biggest assignment in his third Davis Cup stint against Suk Hyun-joon in the opening singles at 10 a.m.

"I'm excited and a little nervous, but ready to play my game," said Tierro, son of a retired US Navyman from Olongapo City.

Johnny Arcilla, the country's No. 1, clashes with Jun Woong-sun, ranked 713 in the world, in the second singles.

International Tennis Federation representative and Davis Cup referee Denis Overberg of Australia presided over the draw yesterday at the PCA.

Also present were Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez, International Olympic Committee representative Frank Elizalde, Philta president Buddy Andrada, Davis Cup administrator Ajay Pathak, Philta executive vice-president Manuel Misa, South Korean coach Yoon Yong-il and non-playing captain Ro Gap-taik.

Tierro, a product of the Subic Bay Tennis Academy, finally got to play in his second Davis Cup last year, beating Hong Kong's No. 1 player in a reverse singles as the Philippines won the tie, 5-0.

But Korea is a different story altogether.

The Philippines, according to Pathak, hasn't beaten Korea in the Davis Cup since the '80s.

A team led by Ody Gabriel bowed to the Koreans at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Courts in 1984. The result was also the same in 1988 and 1990.

The status of Korea's Chuk Hee-seok, winner of the last two PCA Opens, remains uncertain due to a shoulder injury.

Chuk, who drubbed Arcilla in the 2003 and 2004 PCA Open finals, is slated to play in the doubles with Kim Dong-hyun tomorrow against Rolando Ruel and Johnny Victorino.

Surprisingly, the Korean hasn't included Kim Sun-yong in their initial list. Kim, who is with the team here, is the world's No. 2 junior player and the other member of last year's Australian Open juniors doubles champion team.

SPORTSWATCH

Bitoon blots Nadera's Palawan ledger

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—International Master Barlo Nadera dropped his final-round match to fellow Cebuano IM Richard Bitoon in 38 moves of a Nimzo Indian Defense Wednesday but still emerged as champion in the 2005 Palawan Open chess tournament at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum here. Nadera, who clinched the title in the penultimate round by beating Fide Master Jesse Noel Sales, wound up with 8 points on eight wins and a defeat. He received the top purse of P30,000. Bitoon finished half a point behind to win the runner-up prize of P20,000. Sales outplayed reigning National Open champion NM Darwin Laylo in the final round to tie for third at 7 points with top seed and Asian zonal champion Ronald Dableo. The duo split the combined third and fourth prizes of P25,000. Nolte, Jess Cagumbay, Rolando Jimenez, Verth Alora, Anthony Lungcay and Jess Maberit tied for fifth with 6 points. ***Marlon Bernardino, Contributor***

Billiards congress elections March 18

THE BILLIARDS and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) has announced the holding of an election to select its board of directors on March 18. BSCP president Ernest Fajardo said the election was approved at a special board meeting called to ratify a new membership directory. "The election of a new board will pave the way for the implementation of an expanded development program for billiards," Fajardo said. Present at the board meeting were Fajardo, BSCP chair Arturo Ilagan and director Willie Caballes. Joaquin Perez de Tagle, secretary general, did not attend. A fifth board seat is currently vacant. The special board meeting also approved Fajardo's recommendation for the expansion of the BSCP to represent all sectors of the billiards industry. At the March 18 meeting, all certified members of the BSCP will elect five members to the board. Those chosen will then elect the officers of the association for the year.

Revival of 6-footers' caging slated

ORGANIZERS of the Six-Footers Basketball League are reviving the novel league in April, this time on a nationwide scale. "This is the youth's opportunity to be noticed and get the chance to barge into the elite amateur basketball circuit in Manila," said project director Johny Tam, who also coaches the Philippine national youth team. Participants must be 18 years old or below, and no less than six-feet flat and must be born on or after 1988. This year's league will be organized by the BAP and backed by Airfreight 2100. Tryouts will be held this March throughout the country. At the end of the elimination round, two teams each from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and the National Capital Region, will advance to the national finals to be held in Manila in April, said Tam.

SEAG preparations tackled in SCOOP

THE COUNTRY'S readiness to host the 23rd Southeast Asian Games will be tackled at the SCOOP sa Kamayan weekly session today at the Kamayan Restaurant-Padre Faura in Malate. First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Philippine Sports Commission officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez and Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee chair Roberto Pagdanganan have been invited to discuss the latest developments in the country's preparations for the Games set Nov. 27 to Dec. 5 this year. Also appearing as guest is Manila Sports Council chair Ali Atienza who will be talking about his plans for the coming Fourth Manila Youth Games. The session starts at 11 a.m.

Derby big guns clash at Pasay cockpit

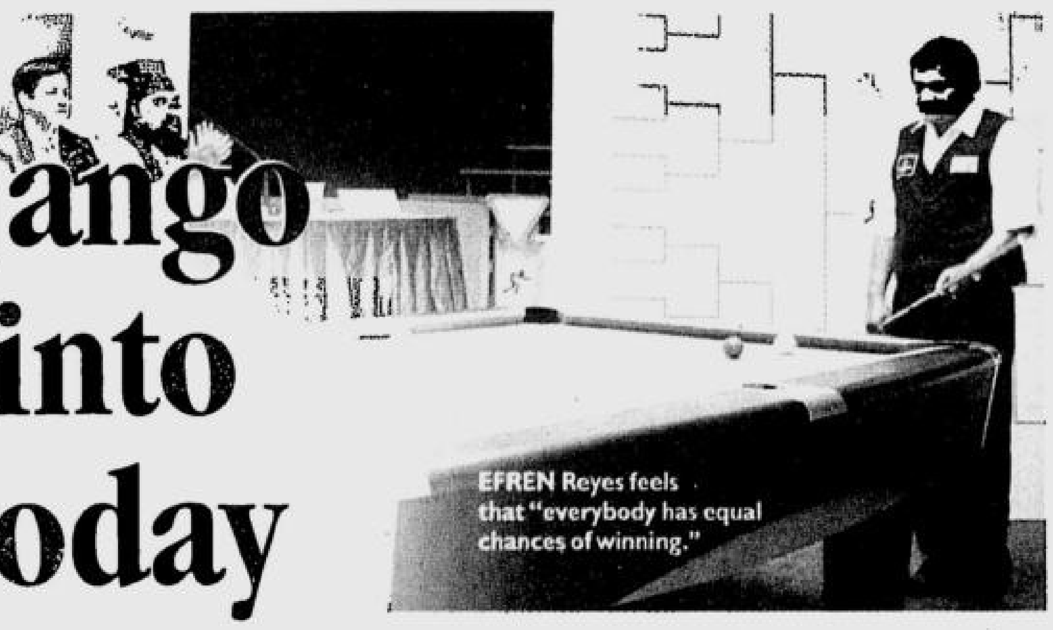
BIG-TIME cockers and breeders clash anew today in a 4-cock derby at the Pasay City Cockpit. More than 60 fights are lined up in the event sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Derby hosts Gene Avendano and Alex Tang said among those seeing action are Benjie Lim, Pepito Ngo, Frankie Uy, Boy Royo, Pol Estrellado, Joey Lapid, Arman Santos, Blandy Tolentino, Jack Chung, Jake Macasaet, PCCA derby champion William Go, Allan Siaco, Bobbit Ples, Strike Revilla and Ramon Mancenares. Up for grabs is P300,000 for an entry fee of P10,000. Meanwhile, Pasay Cockpit's new hackfight format (2-cock ulutan) starts this Sunday. For an entry fee of P1,100, each champion will receive P6,000. The hackfights are every Sunday and Wednesday.

Largahan championship round today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP round of the P1.5-million Largahan 5-Cock Derby, a major Roligon Mega Cockpit event which has attracted 329 entries, kicks-off today with 150 fights on tap. The derby hosted by RMC owner Rolly Ligon, starts promptly at 10 a.m. Bulacan's Jeric Junio, fresh off his victory in the Roligon Anniversary Derby, heads a tough cast of participants with two wins each who are gunning for the title and the bonus prize for the fastest-kill champion, an imported Toyota 4x4 Surf. Also with two wins are former World Slasher champ Rey Briones, Nelson Uy, Zaldy Raymundo, Wil Vigilla, Arnel Geronga, Dong Lacson, Allan Siaco, Boy Jalandoni, Pol Derpo, Rep. Ronnie Puno, Art de Castro, Bimbo Zulueta, Grace Jabile, and Colonel Catiis, among others.

ASIAN 9-BALL

Bata, Django plunge into action today



EFREN Reyes feels that "everybody has equal chances of winning."

By June Navarro

SINGAPORE—Winning in Asia's premiere 9-ball tour is fast becoming a habit for Efren "Bata" Reyes.

In contrast, Francisco "Django" Bustamante is on a slump since the event's inception two years ago.

Bustamante, fresh off his victory in the P1-million Hope All-Filipino Open, sets out to end his string of setbacks while Reyes, who won five of the tournament's last eight legs, tries to sustain his momentum when the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour 2005 starts today at the Suntec Exhibition Hall here.

The top seed in the 32-player field from 12 Asian countries, Reyes takes on Thailand's Wanshana Poomjaeng in the preliminary round of the event which offers a $10,000 champion's purse.

"Everybody has equal chances of winning this leg," said Reyes, who rated the Taiwanese and his fellow Filipinos as his toughest opponents.

Aside from capturing one of the legs in this island-state last year, Reyes went on to win three of the five stops of the tour which serves as the qualifier for the World 9-Ball Championships.

Reyes also topped the Ho Chi Minh and Taipei legs of the event, where the tour's top 10 finishers advance to the World Championships slated in Taiwan in July.

The second-ranked Bustamante faces little-known Lin Didi of China in the first round. Fellow Filipinos Lee Vann Corteza and Gandy Valle are paired with lesser-known rivals—Muhamad Junarto of Indonesia and Au Siu-Wai of Hong Kong, respectively, while Antonio Gabica meets Japan's Kunihiko Takahashi.

"Winning a leg has been quite elusive for me in the past," said Bustamante, who lost in last year's Manila stop to Corteza. "I guess it's about time I change the outcome."

Now on its third year, the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour offers a total prize of $50,000 for each leg. Jakarta will host the next stop on April 1-3 followed by Kaohsiung on April 29-May 1 and Manila on June 3-5.

Aside from Reyes and Bustamante, other cue masters expected to challenge for the crown are 2000 world champion Chao Fong-pang of Chinese-Taipei, 2004 Taipei leg first runner-up Jeong Young-hwa of South Korea and 16-year-old Taiwanese sensation Wu Chia-ching.

STAR Sports is the tour's official broadcaster.

SCC-Zamboanga barges into semis; Cubs win by 88

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DUMAGUETE CITY (via Infomate)—Bohol Institute of Technology was in a hurry to go home, and Southern City College-Zamboanga obliged them yesterday.

The Zamboanga dribblers broke away in the second quarter and became the first senior semifinalists in the National Students basketball championships with a 123-97 rout of the Bohol cagers, who had asked for an early game schedule to catch their ferry yesterday afternoon.

SCC-Zamboanga moves up against National Capital Region powerhouse University of Perpetual Help-Rizal, which has swept all its games so far and is expected to win handily over West Negros College in a quarterfinal tiff late last night.

Meanwhile, defending junior champion San Beda College and Philippine Christian University sustained their unbeaten runs to reach the semifinals.

With James Martinez flinging three-pointers almost at will, the Cubs, gunning for their 13th title and third straight crown, ripped Sacred Heart School-Cebu, 126-38.

The Baby Dolphins routed University of Perpetual Help-Laguna, 92-61.

Brothers James and Allen Mangahas led PCU with 28 and 16 points, respectively, as the Baby Dolphins, runners-up last year, advanced against the winner of the Sacred Heart-Cagayan de Oro-Holy Child-Davao game which was still being played at presstime.

Martinez hit six triples to finish with 30 points for the Cubs, who will face the victor of the game pitting St. Clare College and Iloilo Central Commercial High which was also being played in Tanjay.

Fhadzmir Bandaying hit 22 points in the first half as SCC-Zamboanga outclassed the Bohol cagers.

The Zamboangueños will try to avert an all-NCR semifinal cast with an upset win over the Perpetual Help Altas, who are favored to advance along with National University, University of Santo Tomas and defending champion Philippine Maritime Institute.

"NCR teams are always difficult to beat, but we will find a way to beat Perpetual," said Ernie Moriones, whose team placed fourth last year in Lucena City after it bowed, incidentally, to the Las Piñas-based school in the semis.

Bandaying finished with 33 points, while Darwin Cordero and Von Harry Lanete contributed 20 points apiece for SCC.

TRIATHLON DEAL: The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) and the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) are teaming up again for the staging of this year's Subic Bay International Triathlon set May 8. A memorandum of agreement between the two parties was signed recently, with TRAP president Tom Carrasco Jr. (right) and SBMA senior deputy administrator for support services head Monina Pineda (left) and SBMA chief of staff Josielyn Alvarado formalizing the partnership.

Bobby Pacquiao set for sixth title defense

PHILIPPINE super featherweight champion Bobby Pacquiao will defend his crown over 12 rounds against top contender Dexter "Dinamita" Delada of Cebu on April 23 in Manila. Pacquiao will be making the sixth defense of his title against the tall and lanky Camiguin-raised Delada, a protege of Cebu promoter Rex "Wakee" Salud. Pacquiao is coming off a ninth-round knockout loss at the hands of IBF Pan Pacific featherweight titlist Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym last Feb. 18 in Pattaya, Thailand. The once-beaten Delada (10-1, 8 KOs) is on a three-bout winning streak since suffering a shock first-round knockout defeat at the hands of Nonoy Gonzales in April last year. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

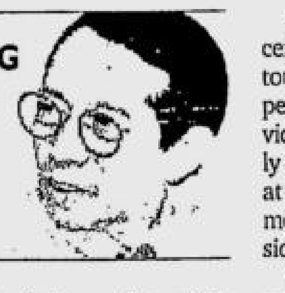
RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Speed O War 2. Windlass
Race 2—1. Bari Bari 2. Hinobaan Boy 3. Diamond Charlie/Good Day 4. Romantic Bay
Race 3—1. Beatitudes 2. Friendly Lover 3. Charming Belle
Race 4—1. Divine Right 2. Serendipity 3. Great Year 4. Titan
Race 5—1. Split Decision 2. Jedi 3. Time Deposit 4. Kantayok
Race 6—1. Fabiola/Shades of Red 2. Love and Money 3. Good Heart 4. Mercury Rising
Race 7—1. Fine Offer 2. Material Trick 3. Diva 4. Sir Olizon
Race 8—1. Ichiro 2. Blitzkrieg 3. Sagittarius 4. Smarty Jude
Race 9—1. Naughty 2. Seeing Red 3. Half Medium 4. Extreme Magic/Silent Operator 5. Wynona Raider 6. Ravishing Raffy

Django proves his true worth

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Iñigo

FLAMBOYANT Francisco "Django" Bustamante lived up to his lofty billing as heir apparent to billiards legend Efren "Bata" Reyes by nosing out reigning world champion Alex Pagulayan, 15-13, in the finals of the P1-million Hope All-Filipino 9-Ball Open at the IBC-13 Studio on Sunday.

The nail-biting victory was worth P500,000 for the never-say-die Bustamante, who posted his first triumph at home against his fellow Filipinos.

"*Akala ko talo na naman* (I thought I would lose again)," he said after the tournament organized by Puyat Sports headed by sports patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, Jemah Television president Mark Roces and tourney director Rolly Vicente.

A former World Pool League champion and the world's No. 1 ranked player, Bustamante came from behind to beat Pagulayan and emerge the surprise winner. "*Nawalan na ako ng pag-asa ng lumamang si* Alex at 8-12 (I lost hope when Alex took the lead at 8-12)," Bustamante said, "but I regained my composure when he scratched twice."

A veteran of the international billiards scene since the early 1990s, the 41-year-old Bustamante banked not only on his vast experience but also on his big fighting heart to down the much younger Pagulayan, who is only 26. As Reyes himself once said; "*Mayroong* advantage *si* Django *sa ibang* players *dahil mas matibay ang loob niya* (Django has the advantage over the other players because he is more stout-hearted)."

Incidentally, if Reyes' and Bustamante are given the chance to play in this year's Southeast Asian Games, I think billiards officials should field them in the 9-ball events, especially the 9-ball doubles. In my view, the Reyes-Bustamante combination is the perfect pair in the 9-ball doubles because they are well-trained, more focused and comfortable playing with each other as a tandem. More importantly, their forbidding presence in the Philippine team will surely make the opposition tremble in fear and further boost the country's chances of winning gold medals in the SEA Games.

Bustamante teamed up with Antonio Lining to win the 9-ball doubles gold medal in the 2003 Busan Asian Games, the country's second gold after four-time World Cup champion Paeng Nepomuceno and RJ Bautista earlier topped the men's doubles in bowling.

Bustamante, Reyes, Pagulayan and Lee Vann Corteza, along with qualifiers Gandy Valle and Antonio Gabica, will be seeing action in the 2005 San Miguel Beer-Asian 9-Ball Tour which fires off in Singapore today. The other legs in the circuit will be staged in Jakarta, Kaoshiung and Manila.

* * *

AN APPEAL TO REPRESENTATIVE PUENTEVELLA. Now is the time for our sports leaders to prod the members of Congress, including Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, to file a bill that will reward achievers in non-Olympic sports like golf where Jennifer Rosales recently emerged winner of the $1-million SBS Open Championship in Hawaii.

While it is true that the government gives incentives to the winners of these non-Olympic tournaments, the incentives should be made permanent, repeat permanent, as what is provided for in Republic Act 9064, the one and only sports incentives law in the country, and not at the whim of whoever is head of the government or the PSC (Philippine Sports Commission).

I say RA 9064 should be amended because it rewards only the winners of the Olympics, Asian Games and Southeast Asian Games and not the champions of non-Olympic sports like golf, billiards, bowling and chess. As I have said before, a well-earned victory in a world-level championship even though it is outside the Olympics should be recognized and rewarded just like a victory in the Olympics and Asian Games.

Besides, the goodwill generated for the Philippines in recent years by the winners of these non-Olympic sports is immeasurable. Thus, it is our responsibility and moral duty to appreciate the sterling feats of Jennifer Rosales and Dorothy Delasin in golf, Efren "Bata" Reyes, Alex Pagulayan and Django Bustamante in billiards, grandmaster Eugene Torre and Mark Paragua in chess and four-time World Cup champion Paeng Nepomuceno, CJ Suarez, Bong Coo and the late Lita de la Rosa in bowling. They all deserved a just reward all the more so because their foreign trips and the subsequent wholesome media coverage have been at no cost to the government.

Also, it is not the fault of these athletes if their sports are not included in the Olympic calendar. These non-Olympic athletes succeeded and became champions in their own right because they trained and prepared just as hard as their counterparts in the Olympics.

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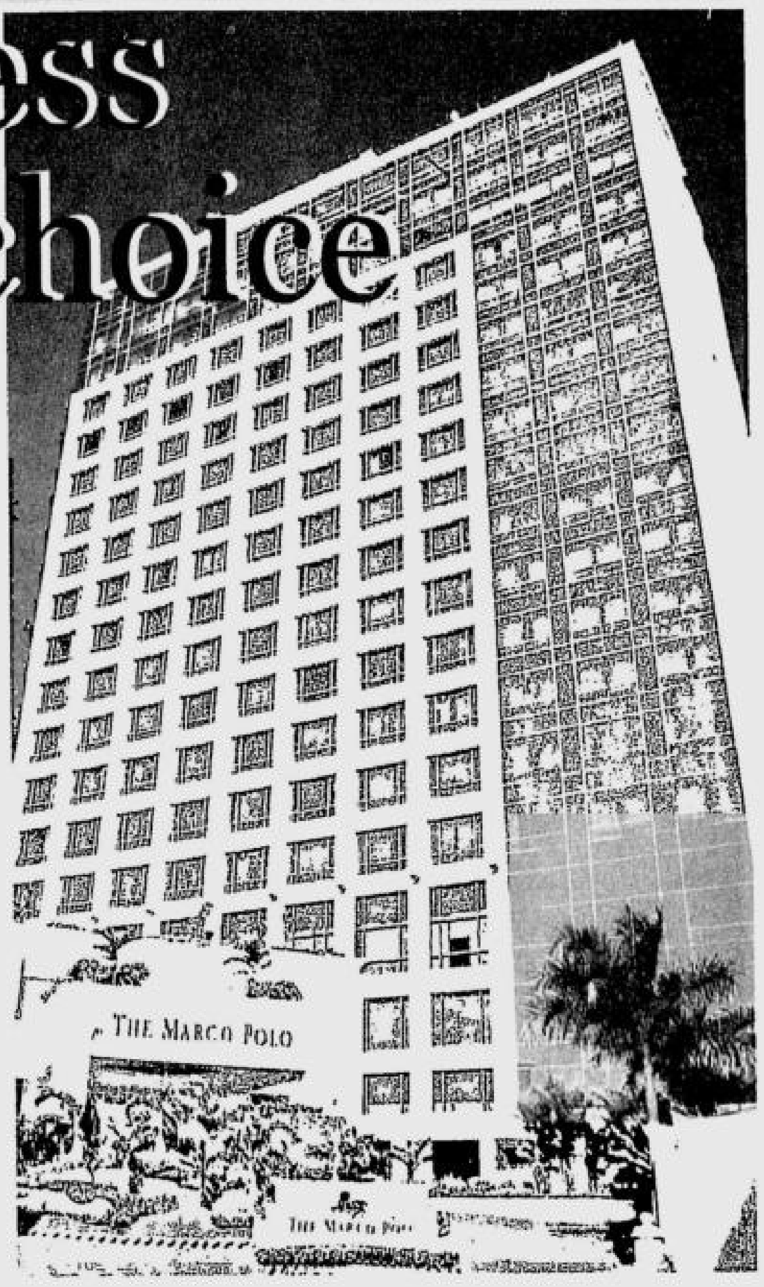

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The Marco Polo, Davao is a preferred venue for corporate meetings and conventions with a ballroom and function rooms equipped with modern technology. The Hotel's strategic location allows one to mix business with leisure. Right across is the bohemian Aldevinco Shopping Center, and a block away is The Venue Entertainment Center and Rizal Promenade.

It is not surprising that among the 13 national conventions set this year in Davao, a number are booked in the hotel. In February, the hotel housed the participants to the Philippine Omega Cup Golf Tournament. In March, the World Bank Meeting with Donor Countries to the Philippines will also be held in the hotel. Other big groups to be accommodated at The Marco Polo in the next few months are the Philippine Obstetricians and Gynecologists Society Midyear Convention, 5th Mindanao Culinary Festival and the Philippine College of Physicians National Convention.

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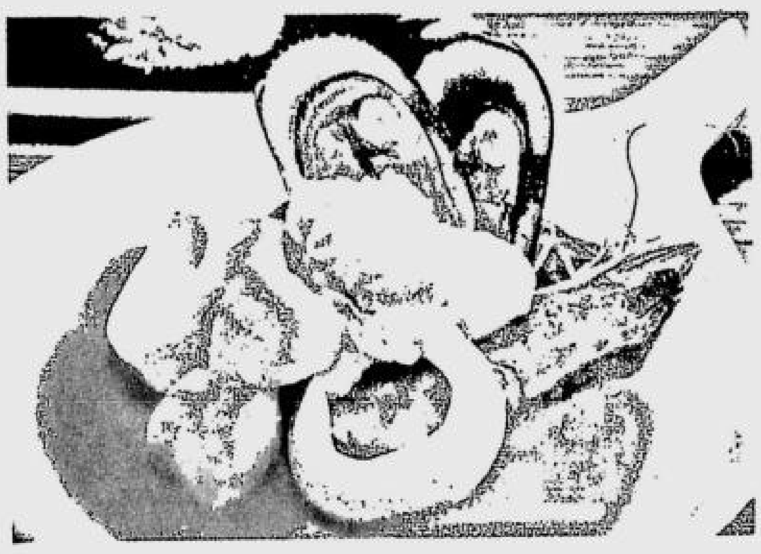

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Ask for the Chef's Daily Recommendations during lunch such as roast beef, grilled meat and seafoods. Savor the unique dishes conceived by chef Willy and chef Joan served during lunchtime at the dining area of Fiesta San Miguel.

And for all the gentlemen, it's time to treat yourself again with simple and reasonably priced privileges you can't resist. Every Tuesday is your big night, enjoy the M'nBeer night for 3 hours of unlimited freshly brewed San Miguel Beer for only P330++. Enjoy the smooth taste of freshly brewed San Miguel Beer only at Fiesta San Miguel.

Summer at the Garden

STARTING this March, City Garden Hotel Makati offers families first class amenities at attractive and affordable rates.

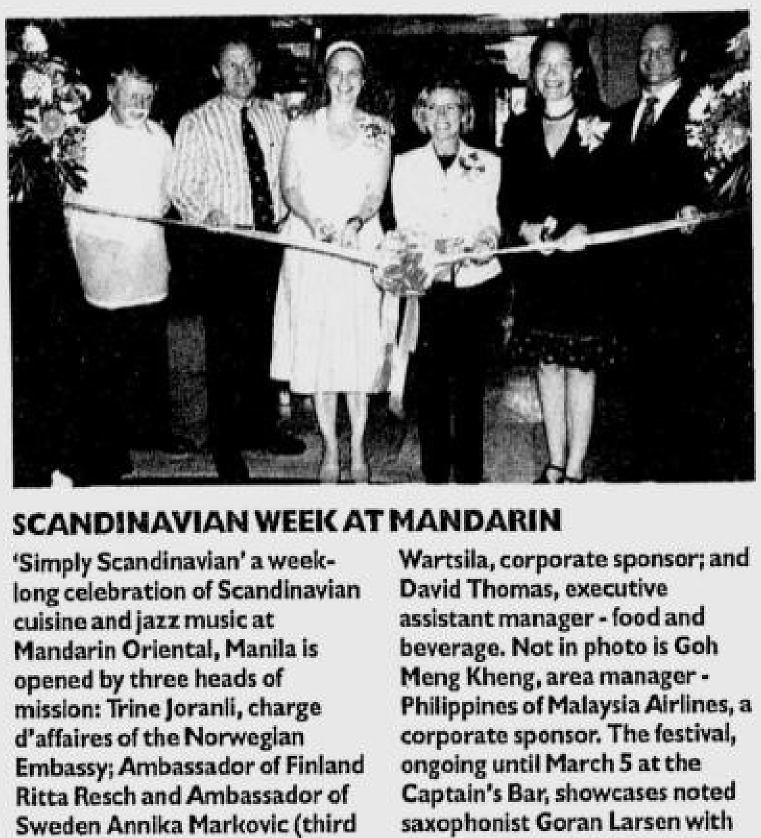
For as low as P1,350 per person on twin-sharing basis, one can enjoy the hotel's tastefully elegant guest rooms and facilities, inclusive of a choice of free sumptuous buffet breakfast for two or a Spa service at the hotel's Body & Face by Mendez, free use of its open-air swimming pool at the Roofdeck and its fully equipped Gym. Two children below 12 years of age, sharing room/bed with parents, stay for free.

Le Jardin Restaurant showcases a splendid array of international cuisine. While Roofdeck Bar & Grill offers summer's all time favorites like Halo-Halo, Barbeque grills, sandwiches, pasta, pizza and other delectable choices, daily.

The Gym, at the hotel's upper penthouse on the 23rd floor, offers a healthy alternative to keep fit while enjoying the magnificent view of the metropolis.

For those needing extra pampering, the Body & Face by Mendez at the hotel's penthouse level has US-sourced products and well-trained therapists and doctors who administer an array of refreshing and rejuvenating facial and body treatments, body massage, weight loss program, Botox, and other anti-aging and health care services are available at very affordable prices.

For reservations or inquires, call (02) 899-1111.



SCANDINAVIAN WEEK AT MANDARIN

'Simply Scandinavian' a week-long celebration of Scandinavian cuisine and jazz music at Mandarin Oriental, Manila is opened by three heads of mission: Trine Joranli, charge d'affaires of the Norwegian Embassy; Ambassador of Finland Ritta Resch and Ambassador of Sweden Annika Markovic (third to fifth from left, respectively). Assisting them are, from left: Hans Witterberg, organizer of 'Simply Scandinavian' weeks; Seppo Hautajoki, president of Wartsila, corporate sponsor; and David Thomas, executive assistant manager - food and beverage. Not in photo is Goh Meng Kheng, area manager - Philippines of Malaysia Airlines, a corporate sponsor. The festival, ongoing until March 5 at the Captain's Bar, showcases noted saxophonist Goran Larsen with the Helsinki Jazz Quartet and Swedish jazz singer Christina Gustafsson nightly, and a Scandinavian smorgasbord at lunch and dinner.

Ingenious wedding package at The Bellevue

THE BELLEVUE Hotel offers the ideal wedding package to cater to every particular need of discriminating couples. The illustrious hotel offers an elegant ambiance for wedding functions that are reasonably priced. The Bellevue's Wedding Package suits the couples' tasteful preferences in addition to the quality of banquet service it offers.

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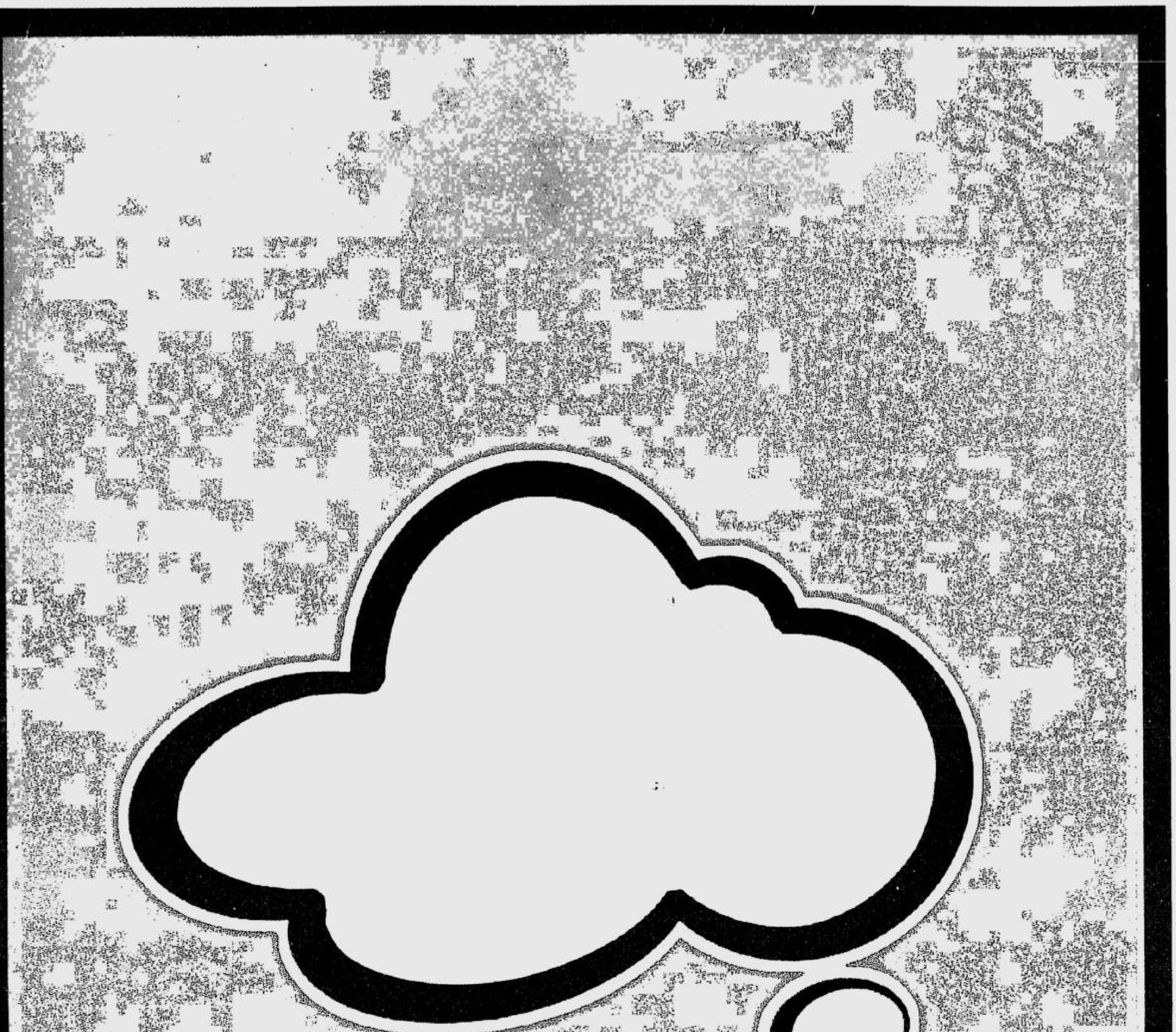
For inquiries, call 771-8181.

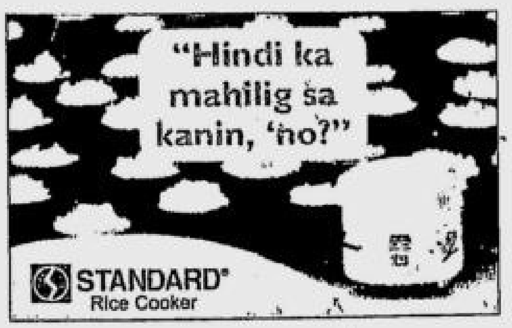


A thought from a non-reader.

A mind on the blink can be a real turn-off. If you need a bit of stimulation, try reading for a change. Just a thought.

Read more. Be more.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER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Editor Louie C. Camino
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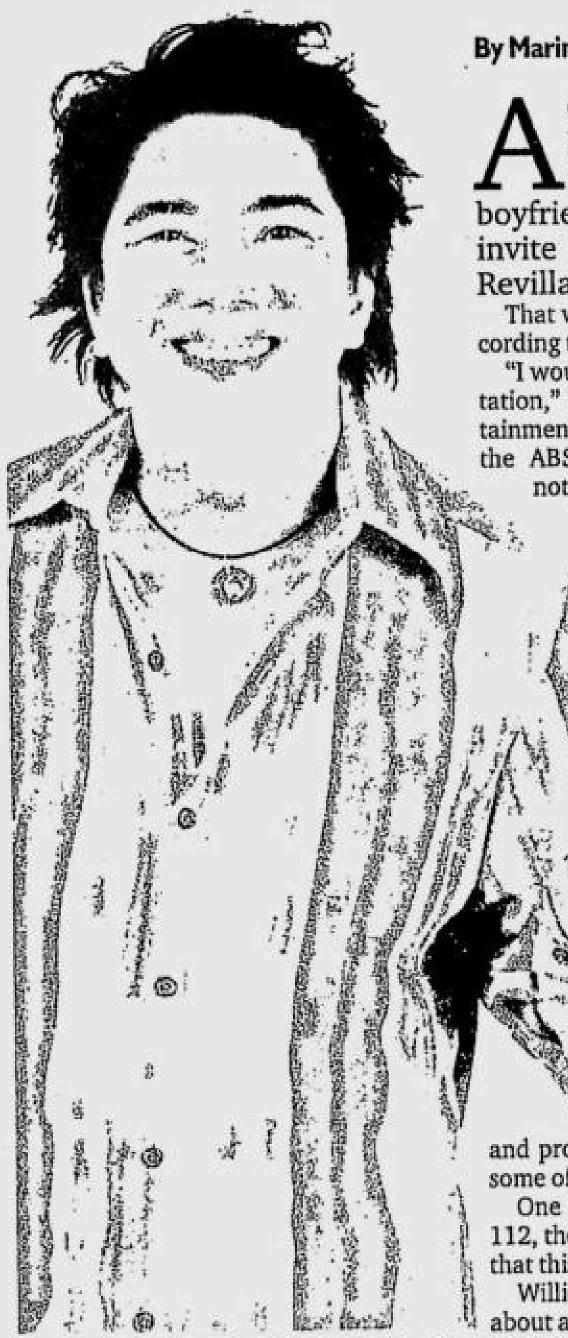
Vertical Rotisserie

Not invited to Princess' wedding

By Marinel R. Cruz



WILLY REVILLAME: "But I'm happy for her."

ACTRESS Princess Punzalan, set to marry her American boyfriend this year, did not invite ex-husband Willie Revillame to the wedding.

That was "out of delicadeza," according to Willie himself.

"I wouldn't go even with an invitation," Willie told INQUIRER Entertainment in a recent one-on-one at the ABS-CBN compound. "That's not good for her."

Princess and her boyfriend are planning to live in the US.

"In my heart, I'm very happy that she found a lasting relationship," the TV host added. "I hope he is the right man for her."

Their marriage was annulled several years ago.

Willie said he and Princess continued to help each other "emotionally."

They frequently send text messages to each other, he said, and proceeded to show this writer some of said messages.

One read: "I was reading Psalm 112, then I remembered you. I pray that this will happen to you."

Willie explained: "The psalm is about a man succeeding."

Another SMS said: "I thank God. There's no bitterness between us."

Willie said Princess even called him up when she started dating. "Princess said, 'I want you to hear it from me first.' I told her to go for whatever made her happy."

Willie is hosting a show on ABS-CBN again. He was fired for the second time last year after uttering "offensive remarks" on the noontime show, "Masayang Tanghali Bayan."

Movie and Television Review and Classification Board Chief Marissa Laguardia complained to the station after Willie said on-camera that his wish for co-host, Mahal, who was then celebrating her birthday, was for her to finally lose her virginity.

"I bear no grudge against Chairman Laguardia," said Willie. "We saw each other once in a restaurant, and I even said hello."

In 1999, the MTRCB suspended Revillame and co-hosts John Estrada and Randy Santiago for alleged vulgar behavior in the treatment of contestants in the Calendar Girl segment of the show.

In July 2004, the network suspended Revillame and Estrada for a week for uttering a Tagalog euphemism for masturbation.

"She said I should be thankful for this chance to work for the network again," Willie said of Laguardia. "I am. My bosses said I'm back only because the people want me. I will work hard to repay them."

"Wowowee" airs back-to-back with Kris Aquino's "Plipinas, Game Ka Na Ba?" Mondays to Fridays. Willie is backed up by three sexy hosts—Iya Villania, Janelle Jamir and Kat Alano.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Friday March 4, 2005

TUESDAY
7:30 PM and 10:00 PM
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY
7:00 PM and 10:00 PM
American Idol
ABC
iba tayo
SPECIAL SCHEDULE THIS WEEK!

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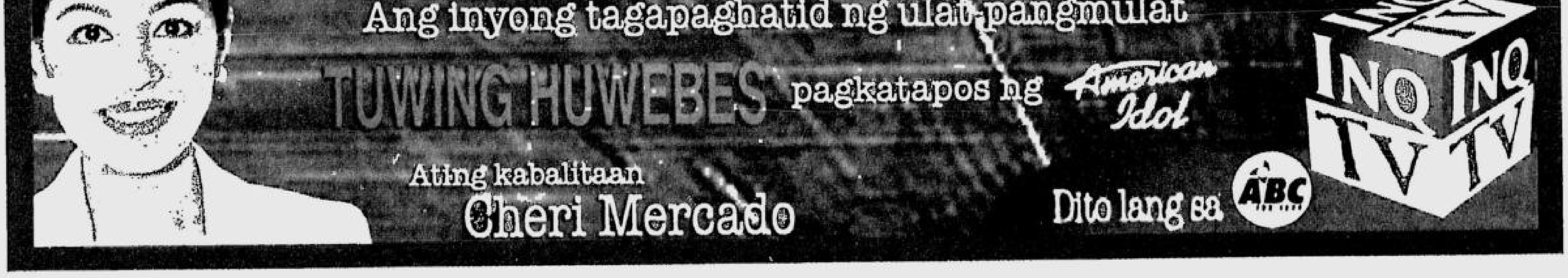
Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Search For A Star In A Million			Insider
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		GSIS Member's Hour		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		9th Tinig Awards				Ugnayang Pambansa	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA		PBA		Sentro	PBA					Big News	TNA Impact		Billboard On-Air	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Bubble Gang			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberrys	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Just For Laughs	Enterprise		Monk		Dead Zone		Newswatch Now	Adboard Golf		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		Chowtime Na!		V League				Pulis Na Palaban	IBC News Tonite	GMA The Working President	
Solar		WWE Velocity		Thunder Box		Rastal	Ozzy & Drix	Mucha Luchal	Avengers	Stargate SG1		WWE Smackdown				WWE Velocity		Wow	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants		Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Star MYX	Club MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		What I Like About You	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace		Iron Chef				Tonight Show			
Studio 23				Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius			Justice League	Wazzup Wazzup	Spider-Man The Animated Series			Playing It Straight		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Yes Dear		
AXN		The President's Man Ground 0				Enervon AXN Xtreme	Now See This (Season II)	Samurai X	Samurai X	Andromeda (Season III)		The Making Of	Rated X	Cold Squad		Men In Black II			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	TNA Wrestling		Totally Outrageous Behavior Caught On Tape	Weird TV	Really Caught In The Act		Friends	Totally Outrageous Behavior Caught On Tape
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Seconds From Disaster		Secret China		Capturing The Killer Croc		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Battle For The Beach		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Castro			
Solar Sports		IBF Korea Open '05 WDbls		WTA '05 Volvo Women's Open SF1	Sounds of the Finals			NBA Fan Favorite				In This Corner		NBA Game: Indiana @ Denver					GWS Ep 8-2005
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Ming's Quest							Back To Basics		
HBO	Empire (2:25 PM)			The Freshman			Cybermutt (5:45PM)				Last Man Standing (7:20 PM)			The Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers					
Star Movies			Tornado Warning			Good Morning Vietnam				The First 20 Million Is Always The Hardest		Me, Myself and Irene				Slammed (10:55PM)			
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	Codename: Kids Next Door	Hi Hi Puffy Ami Yumi	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Courage The Cowardly Dog	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Megas XLR	Aqua Teen (11:15PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				Big 10 Conf. Wildcard Game				Goals!	Atlantic Coast Conf. Georgia Tch vs. Wake Forest				World Tenpin Masters '04		Sportscenter Asia	World Tenpin Masters '04		Eng. Premier League Preview	Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny				My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video		
Cinemax	True Crime (2:45 PM)			Weapons Of Mass Distraction (4:15 PM)			Whitewash: The Clarence Brandley Story				Flashdance			Hercules And The Lost Kingdom			Caught In The Headlights		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Killer Instinct				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye		Choosing Matthias			Child Of Our Time (10:35PM)	Crime Night	Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Power Zone				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Junkyard Wars		American Chopper		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery			
MTV Philippines		Whatever Things	Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Most Wanted		MTV Classic (Var 2)		This Is / Movie of the Month	MTV Diyes		Newlyweds	Be Seen @ MTV	Faking the Video	Laguna Beach	Be Seen @ MTV	MTV Screen	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus		Auto Club 500 Highlights		Porsche mi 98.10	Nissan Open Highlights		You've Got to See This	Italia Serie A Highlight				World Poker Tour ep 7 Mississippi				Inside the PGA	Chrysler Classic of Tucson Highlights		Ford C'ship @ Doral Day2
EWTN	Does The Church Still Teach That	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Stations Of The Cross	Image Of God	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Search And Rescue	Your Call	EWTN Gallery	Life on The Rock Encore		Gospel Of Life In Health Care	Defending Life	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	Backstage	Father Corapi And The Catechism Of The Catholic Church	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.


Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
TUWING HUWEBES pagkatapos ng American Idol
Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV

Death threats a la carte

By Marinel R. Cruz

SHOW STOPPER

TV JOURNALIST Jiggy Manicad has been receiving death threats since November of last year, but the GMA 7 reporter remains unfazed. Threats are no match to the dangers Jiggy has been facing on an almost daily basis while covering his beat.

Jiggy was among the passengers of the Army chopper that crashed into a mountain in San Juan, Nueva Ecija, two years ago. "My left shoulder was injured. I'm still undergoing therapy for tendonitis," he told a group of entertainment writers over lunch last week. "It was terrifying. I recited the Hail Mary twice. I prayed that my body would still be recognizable when my family retrieves it."

The chopper was en route to where the supposed remains of Aglipayan pastor Dakila Lopez of the Philippine Independent Church had earlier been dug up.

Another close call was when a US Marine pointed a gun at Jiggy, who was covering Balikatan 2001 in Basilan. Jiggy recalled: "That was right after the Americans' first encounter with the Abu Sayyaf. Everyone was tense. We [GMA 7 crew] went to the Basilan camp to interview the Filipino commander. The soldier didn't want to let us in. I thought he would really shoot me."

But he carried on, even going to war-torn countries like Iraq and Afghanistan to document people's lives there.

The death threats started when Jiggy did a story on a missing college student. The suspect was the girl's suitor, who was reportedly involved in carnapping and drugs.

No bodyguard, please

He recounted: "After we aired the story, I started receiving text messages that said 'Condolence' or 'May you rest in peace.' But I didn't change my number. I only became more cautious of the people around me. The network offered me a bodyguard, but I declined because he might only attract attention."

To think that Jiggy never dreamed of becoming a TV reporter; he just wanted to be a mechanic and put up his own shop. "But I passed the college exam at UP Los Baños. So I took up communication arts," he said. "I wrote for the student paper."

Rodrigo "Jiggy" Manicad graduated in 1994 and, for three months, was part of the team of writers for ABS-CBN's "Magandang Gabi Bayan," then hosted by Noli de Castro. "Then I went back to Los Baños and worked as assistant editor of one of the publications there," he said. "But I got bored and looked for another job in Manila."

Jiggy went to the GMA 7 office in Quezon City to apply as a writer. "Something really embarrassing happened to me," he said. "The security guard at the gate thought I was one of the people seeking help from 'Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko.' He told me to wait, so I waited for three hours until, finally, I spotted Ma'am Jess (Jessica Soho, news director for GMA News and Public Affairs). She was very accommodating."

He became a writer for "GMA Balita," then hosted by Amado Pineda and Veronica Baluyot. "I stayed [until] '97. Then I transferred to 'Brigada Siyete' as a night reporter."

US award, scholarship

In 2004, Jiggy was granted full scholarship in International Broadcast Journalism by the Cardiff University in Wales. For his work on the documentary "Sa Pusod ng Iraq," with Mike Enriquez and Howie Severino, Jiggy won the Silver Screen Award from the Director's Guild of America.

TO THINK he just wanted to be a mechanic

GMA 7 reporter Jiggy Manicad wins anchoring job for being fearless

"I've learned to enjoy this job," declared Jiggy, now one of his station's senior reporters. "I'm grateful to my bosses for their trust, and for this big break."

Jiggy was referring to his new job as co-anchor of the news program "Reporter's Notebook." He will share hosting chores with Maki Pulido. Reporters Cesar Apolinario, Mark Salazar, Jun Veneracion, Ruth Cabal, Mariz Umali, Iris Cruz and Tina Panganiban-Perez will back up the duo.

"We couldn't think of anyone better than Jiggy and Maki as anchorpersons," said executive producer Joy Madrigal. "[They're] hard-hitting, afraid of no one."

"Reporter's Notebook" airs Tuesdays after the news program "Saksi: Liga ng Katotohanan."

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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

TV SPECIALS THIS WEEK

'Six Days, Seven Nights'

TONIGHT on Star Movies, "Six Days, Seven Nights" will be replayed. The movies stars Harrison Ford, Anne Heche and David Schwimmer. Other repeat days are Mar. 19, 24 and 25.

Zsa Zsa, Karylle at odds

ZSA ZSA Padilla and daughter Karylle are not exactly the best of friends in tomorrow's episode of "Idol Ko Si Kap," on GMA 7. Carmina Villaroel also makes a special guest appearance.

'The Apprentice'

NINE brilliant bookworms with college degrees and nine entrepreneurs armed with only high school diplomas enter the boardroom on March 7, kicking off the third season of "The Apprentice" on ABC. The battle of sexes is over; now it's "book smarts" against "streetsmarts." The competition for a six-figure salary starts at 7:30.

HARRISON Ford and Anne Heche

'The Contender'

SYLVESTER Stallone stars in a brand new, hard-hitting unscripted drama about people who dare to fight for their dreams. Premiering March 8 on AXN is "The Contender," which offers 16 aspiring boxers the chance to become pro prizefighters. Tuesday telecast is at 10:30 a.m., with a replay at 10 p.m. Second telecast is on Friday, March 11, 10 p.m. Regular shows, Mondays at 9 p.m.

Aryana on 'SOP'

FIL-AM singer Aryana is now a regular on GMA 7's "SOP (Sobrang Okey, Pare)," Sundays, 12 noon to 2 p.m. The petite (5'3") stunner was born in Guam, but later moved to California. She went back briefly to Guam, where she won the singing competition "Guam's Shining Star Idol."

ARYANA

Araneta Center
Entertainment Guide
CINEMA SCHEDULES
Gateway CINEPLEX*10
LEVEL 4, GATEWAY MALL
The First and Only Real Cineplex in the Philippines
ONLY P99 ADMISSION • P120 RESERVED SEATS

OSCAR'S BEST FILM FESTIVAL
HITCH
12:55 / 3:40 / 6:25 / 9:10
MILLION DOLLAR BABY
12:40 / 3:30 / 6:25 / 9:10
OUIJA BOARD-BUNSHINSABA
12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30
SON OF THE MASK
1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
CONSTANTINE
12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
THE AVIATOR
12:00 / 3:20 / 6:40 / 10:00
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
1:00 / 3:50 / 6:40 / 9:30
RAY - LIFE STORY OF RAY CHARLES
4:05 / 9:25
SIDEWAYS
1:30 / 6:50

ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ MILLION DOLLAR BABY
11:50 / 2:40 / 5:30 / 8:20
❷ CONSTANTINE
11:20 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
❸ HITCH
12:05 / 2:50 / 5:35 / 8:20
❹ OUIJA BOARD-BUNSHINSABA
11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25
❺ LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
ALL FEATURES AND DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FOR VERIFICATION PLEASE CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555

ARANETA COLISEUM SHOWS
NORAH JONES IN CONCERT
March 12, Saturday
RIVERMAYA & KITCHIE NADAL LIVE!
April 16, Saturday

CENTER EVENTS
BINIBINIS AT ARANETA CENTER
Press Presentation, March 8, Tuesday, 11am, Gateway Mall
Parade of Beauties, March 13, Sunday, 3pm
Grand Coronation Night, March 19 Saturday, 7pm, Araneta Coliseum
COOL JAZZ COOL CLASSICS
Free jazz performance by East Of The City band every Fridays & Saturdays at the Coliseum Circle

NOW OPEN
Italianni's, Cafe Havana, Cafe Adriatico Ground Floor / Cibo Level 2, Gateway Mall
Super Bowl Of China & Food Express Level 3, Gateway Mall
LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

ABS-CBN opens workshops to public

WORKSHOPS@abs-cbn is now accepting enrollees for its summer courses.

The courses available are: Basic Acting, Basic Voice, Musical Theater, Streetdancing, Modern Jazz, Breakdancing, Modeling, Imaging (Personality Development), and Talk Fun (Speech Classes for Kids).

There will be two batches: April 11 to 29, and May 9 to 27. The workshoppers will be featured in a variety show cum graduation exercise.

For inquiries, call 415-3826 or 416-9366.

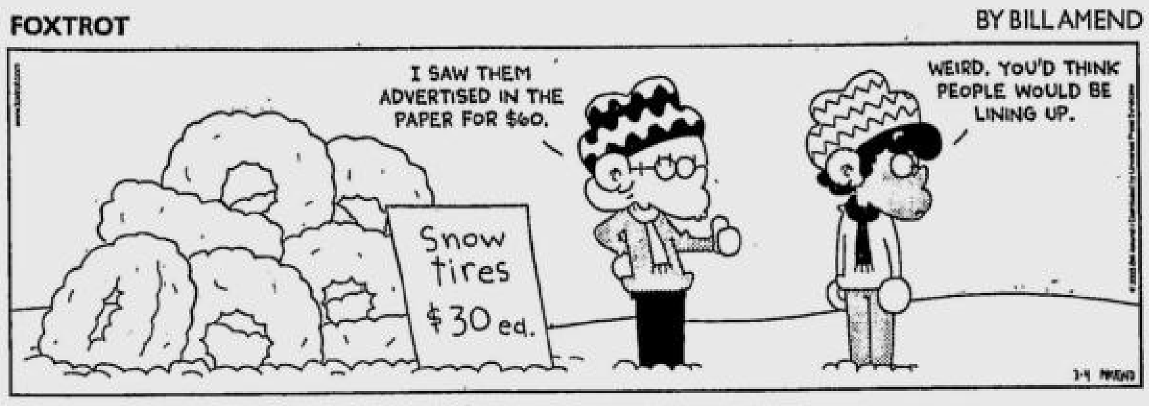
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

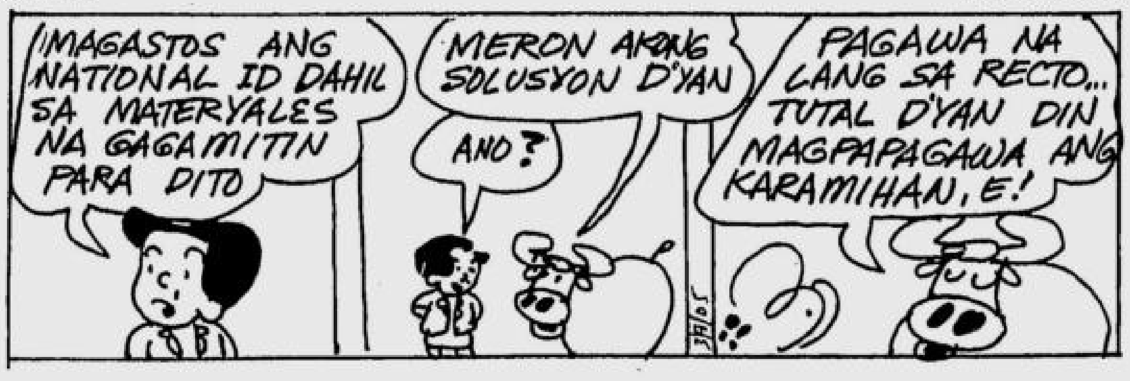
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


Snow tires $30 ea.
I SAW THEM ADVERTISED IN THE PAPER FOR $60.
WEIRD. YOU'D THINK PEOPLE WOULD BE LINING UP.
3-4 AMEND

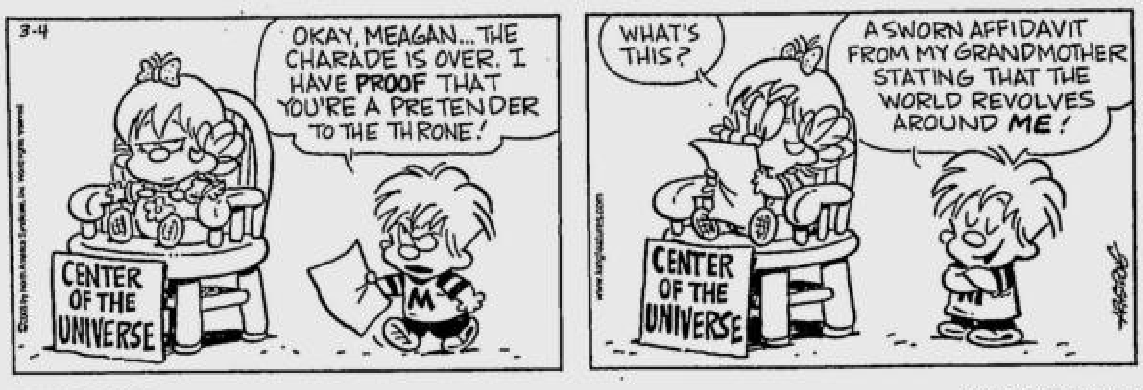
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


IMAGASTOS ANG NATIONAL ID DAHIL SA MATERYALES NA GAGAMITIN PARA DITO
MERON AKONG SOLUSYON D'YAN
ANO?
PAGAWA NA LANG SA RECTO... TUTAL D'YAN DIN MAGPAPAGAWA ANG KARAMIHAN, E!

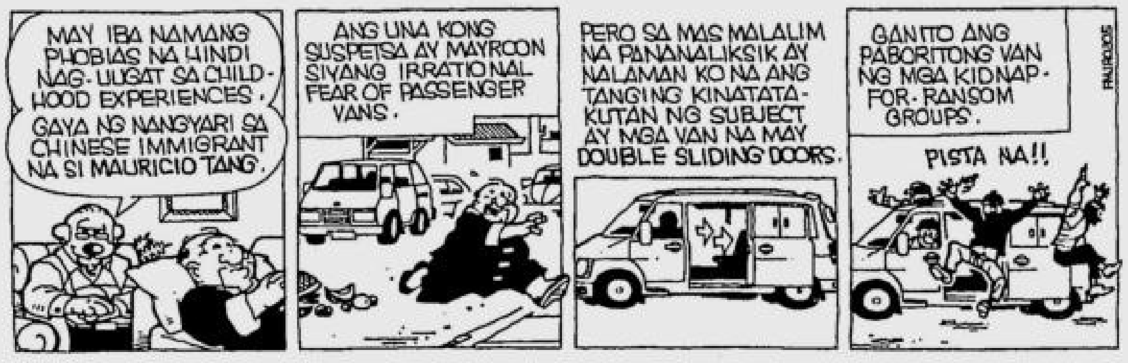
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


3-4
CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE
OKAY, MEAGAN... THE CHARADE IS OVER. I HAVE PROOF THAT YOU'RE A PRETENDER TO THE THRONE!
M
WHAT'S THIS?
A SWORN AFFIDAVIT FROM MY GRANDMOTHER STATING THAT THE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND ME!
CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

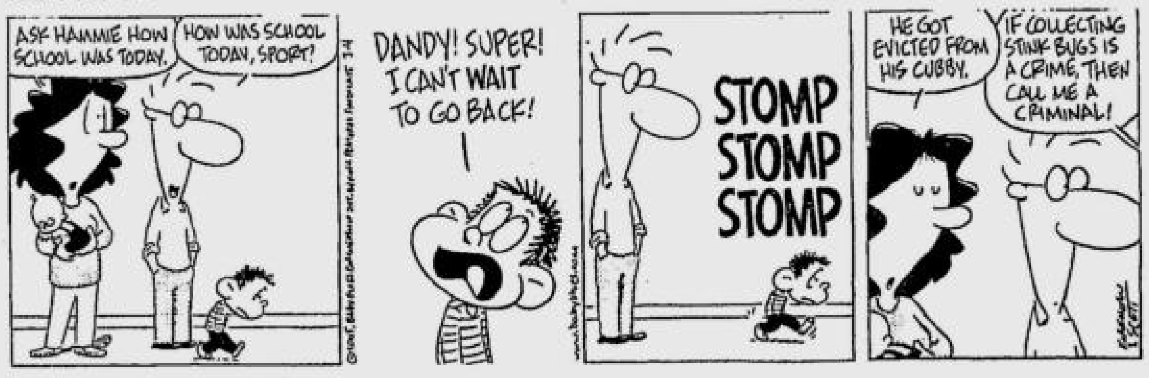
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAY IBA NAMANG PHOBIAS NA HINDI NAG-UUGAT SA CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES. GAYA NG NANGYARI SA CHINESE IMMIGRANT NA SI MAURICIO TANG.
ANG UNA KONG SUSPETSA AY MAYROON SIYANG IRRATIONAL FEAR OF PASSENGER VANS.
PERO SA MAS MALALIM NA PANANALIKSIK AY NALAMAN KO NA ANG TANGING KINATATAKUTAN NG SUBJECT AY MGA VAN NA MAY DOUBLE SLIDING DOORS.
GANITO ANG PABORITONG VAN NG MGA KIDNAP-FOR-RANSOM GROUPS.
PISTA NA!!

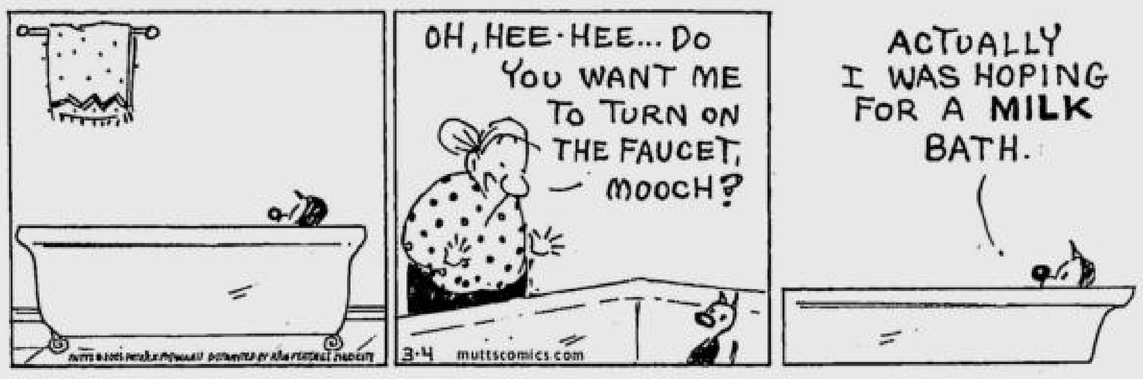
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ASK HAMMIE HOW SCHOOL WAS TODAY.
HOW WAS SCHOOL TODAY, SPORT?
DANDY! SUPER! I CAN'T WAIT TO GO BACK!
STOMP STOMP STOMP
HE GOT EVICTED FROM HIS CUBBY.
IF COLLECTING STINK BUGS IS A CRIME, THEN CALL ME A CRIMINAL!

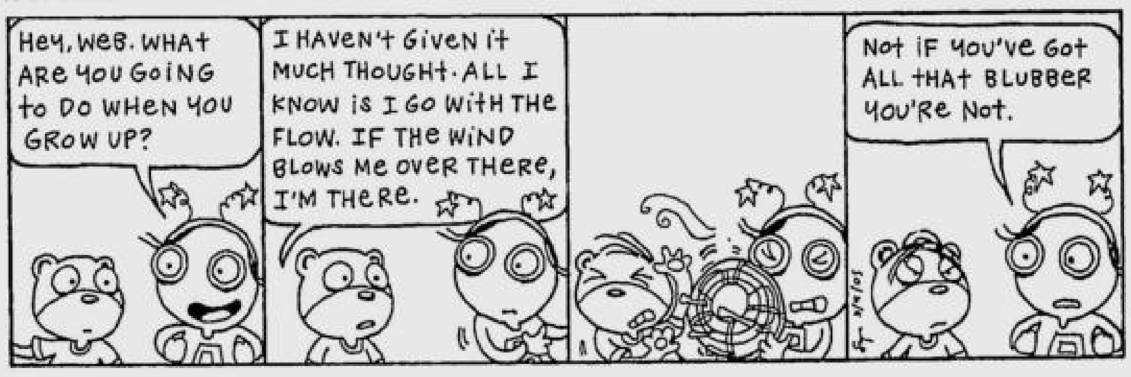
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, HEE-HEE... DO YOU WANT ME TO TURN ON THE FAUCET, MOOCH?
ACTUALLY I WAS HOPING FOR A MILK BATH.
3-4 muttscomics.com

ATOMO AND WEBOY

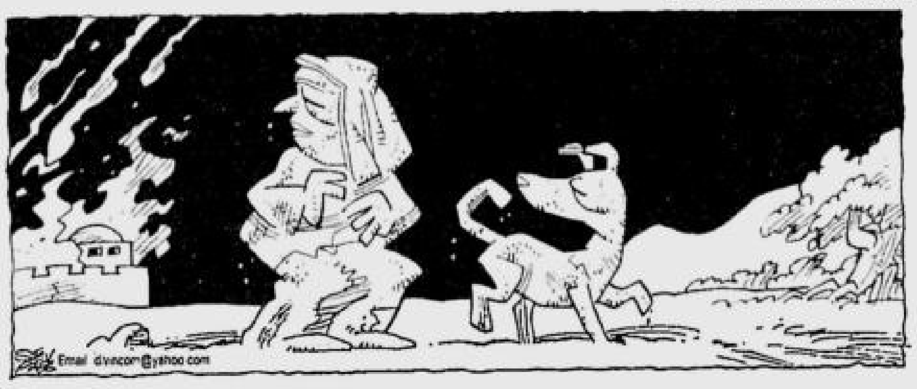
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, Web. What are you going to do when you grow up?
I haven't given it much thought. All I know is I go with the flow. If the wind blows me over there, I'm there.
Not if you've got all that blubber you're not.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

AFTER LOT'S WIFE WAS TURNED INTO A PILLAR OF SALT FOR LOOKING BACK AT SODOM, HIS DOG DID THE SAME— —AND WAS TURNED INTO A PILLAR OF MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE!


Email divincom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are surprisingly self-contained. You can work entirely alone if you must. When you socialize, you prefer the company of a few close friends. You excel at establishing a warm, cozy environment for yourself and your family. You instinctively know what to do. This year brings major change your way (possibly as significant as in 1996).

Birthdate of: Miriam Makeba, singer; Charles Goran, bridge specialist; Patsy Kensit, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your mind is extremely active in the next few weeks. Don't be surprised if it constantly jumps from subject to subject.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can do yourself a favor if you recognize your need to go off by yourself and have some solitude. It's a great time for doing research in the next month.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): In the next few weeks, examine how you fit in with groups. It's important to hang out with quality people. (Your friends affect your mind, which, in turn, affects your future.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): In the month ahead, make an effort to talk to bosses, superiors, parents and employers. You'll be surprised at how much they will listen to you!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good time to register for courses. You're keen to study, write or publish. You want to learn something new and expand your world!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next few weeks, expect to have more discussions about finances, property and anything that you own jointly with someone else. Sort out loose ends here.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In the next few weeks, expect opportunities to have good, heart-to-heart discussions with partners, spouses and close friends. You can accomplish more working with others now. Form work units.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're very keen to do some strong mental work now. Your interest in health and wellness will increase in the next few weeks. You might want to improve your hygiene in some way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): At this time, you want to pursue mental activities for their own sake. You don't need to justify what you're doing. You want to entertain yourself!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Conversations with family members are particularly meaningful now. It's also a good time to do important repairs at home in the next few weeks.

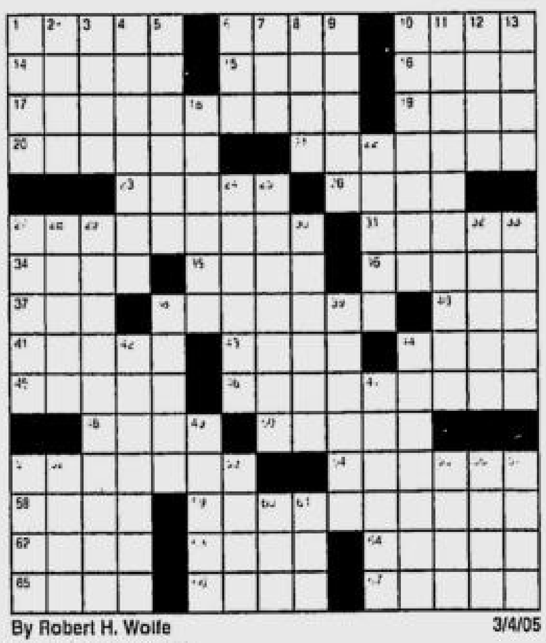
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): The month ahead is a busy time for you. It favors intellectual activities. Short trips, discussions with practically everyone and increased reading and writing are likely.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're giving more thought to whatever it is that you value in life. It's important to know this. If you don't know it, how will you know what to work for?

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 __ and Gomorrah
6 Wound cover
10 Mennen after-shave
14 Writer Calvino
15 Whittle
16 Put one's foot down?
17 Municipal carpenter?
19 Mountain lion
20 Garlic shrimp
21 Belief without holidays?
23 Banana skins
26 Warmth
27 False logic
31 13th-century date
34 Expressions of delight
35 Alt.
36 U.S. family of artists
37 Kanga's kid
38 Rome's Celtic conquests
40 Diarist Anais
41 Concise
43 Old slave
44 Lake formed by Hoover Dam
45 Simpson or Astaire
46 Natural singers
48 AMA members
50 Draws closer
51 Squirms
54 Puget Sound city
58 Tip
59 Flexible principle?
62 Fencing sword
63 Service station job?
64 Choose by vote
65 Boringly studious person
66 Type of curl
67 Quench, as thirst

DOWN
1 Attacks, dog-style
2 Of the ear
3 Computer info
4 Highest point in Greece
5 Swab wielder
6 Health center
7 Is able to
8 Field of expertise
9 Pullman bed
10 Free from strife
11 Pear punisher?
12 Male turkeys
13 Baldwin or Arkin
18 German songs
22 Rope-making plants
24 "__ of the Field"
25 University in Deland, Florida
27 Heart line
28 Called for the hook, perhaps
29 Coastal eatery?
30 Actress de Carlo
32 Homeric epic
33 Markets
38 Hardwood tree
39 Cancel out
42 Assigned a position
44 Name improperly
47 Clamps
49 Markets
51 Reporter's question
52 Harvestable
53 Dish with stock
55 Draft classification
56 Ridicule
57 Dated leader?
60 Japanese sash
61 Ready-go separator



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

3/4/05

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	B	S	■	S	L	A	B	■	S	H	A	D	E
L	O	L	A	■	P	A	L	O	■	H	I	R	E	D
P	R	O	S	■	E	L	O	N	■	A	L	I	B	I
H	E	W	H	O	L	A	U	G	H	S	L	A	S	T
A	N	N	E	A	L	■	■	S	I	T	S	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	T	E	T	S	■	S	A	I	N	T	S
H	A	S	■	E	D	U	C	E	S	■	D	A	R	T
O	T	H	E	R	■	N	O	T	■	B	E	R	E	A
L	O	O	M	■	R	E	T	A	P	E	■	Y	E	T
E	M	P	I	R	E	■	S	T	O	A	T	■	■	■
■	■	■	G	U	N	S	■	■	T	R	I	S	T	E
H	E	A	R	D	T	H	E	B	A	D	N	E	W	S
I	L	I	A	D	■	A	R	A	B	■	G	N	A	T
D	A	N	T	E	■	R	I	L	L	■	L	O	N	E
E	N	T	E	R	■	K	N	E	E	■	E	R	G	S

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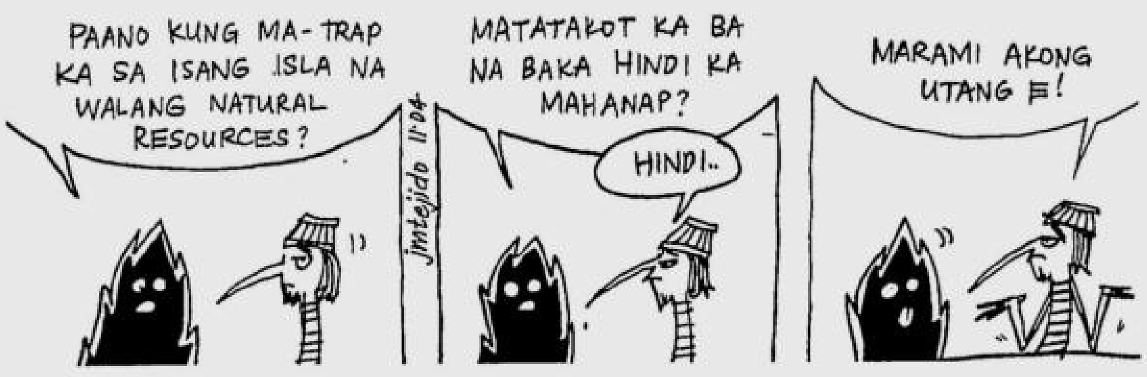
3/4/05

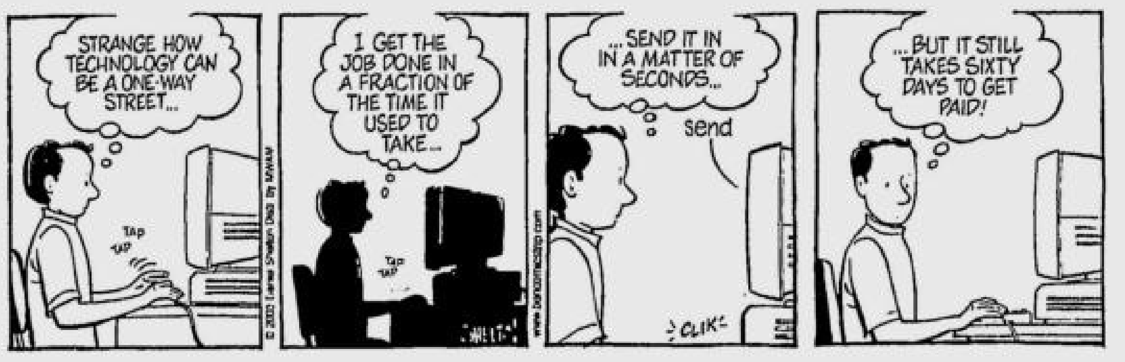
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAANO KUNG MA-TRAP KA SA ISANG ISLA NA WALANG NATURAL RESOURCES?
jmtejido 11-04
MATATAKOT KA BA NA BAKA HINDI KA MAHANAP?
HINDI..
MARAMI AKONG UTANG E!

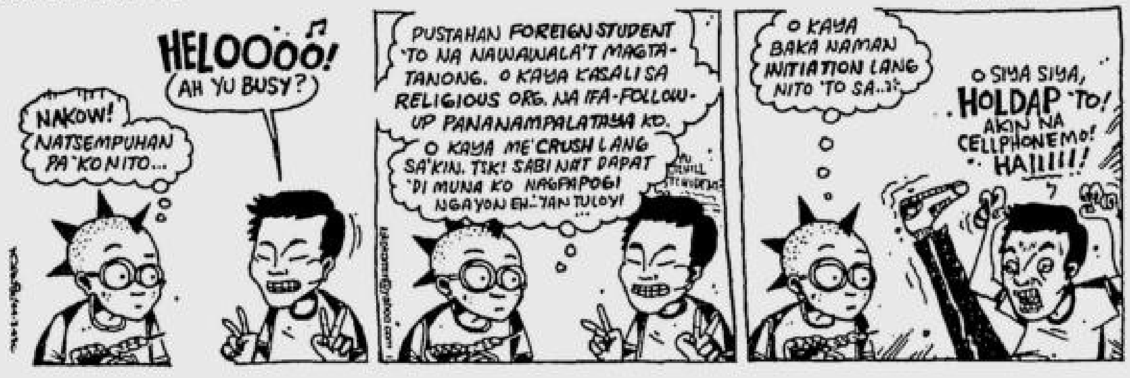
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


STRANGE HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN BE A ONE-WAY STREET...
TAP TAP
I GET THE JOB DONE IN A FRACTION OF THE TIME IT USED TO TAKE...
TAP TAP
...SEND IT IN IN A MATTER OF SECONDS...
send
CLIK
...BUT IT STILL TAKES SIXTY DAYS TO GET PAID!

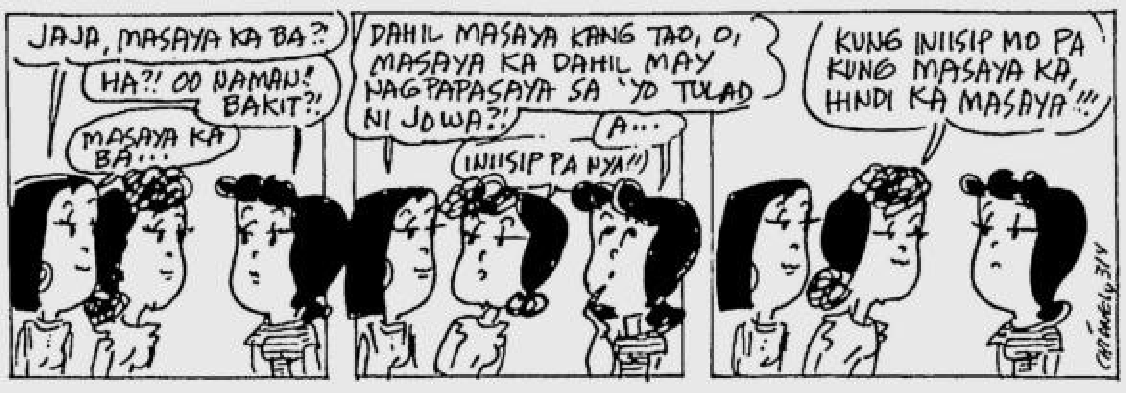
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


NAKOW! NATSEMPUHAN PA'KO NITO...
HELOOOO!
AH YU BUSY?
PUSTAHAN FOREIGN STUDENT 'TO NA NAWAWALA'T MAGTATANONG. O KAYA KASALI SA RELIGIOUS ORG. NA IFA-FOLLOW-UP PANANAMPALATAYA KO. O KAYA ME'CRUSH LANG SA'KIN. TSK! SABI NA'T DAPAT 'DI MUNA KO NAGPAPOGI NGAYON EH. 'YAN TULOY!
O KAYA BAKA NAMAN INITIATION LANG NITO 'TO SA..?
O SIYA SIYA, HOLDAP 'TO! AKIN NA CELLPHONE MO! HA!!!!!

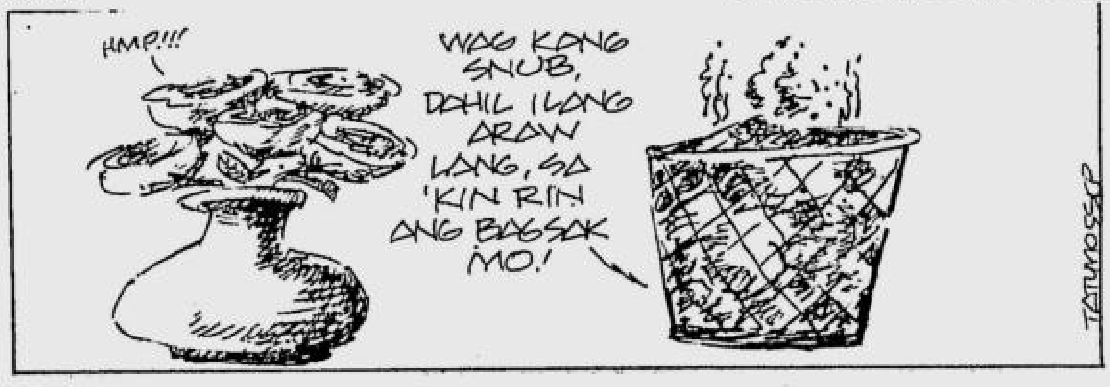
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, MASAYA KA BA?
HA?! OO NAMAN! BAKIT?!
MASAYA KA BA...
DAHIL MASAYA KANG TAO, O, MASAYA KA DAHIL MAY NAGPAPASAYA SA 'YO TULAD NI JOWA?!
A...
(INIISIP PA NYA!!)
KUNG INIISIP MO PA KUNG MASAYA KA, HINDI KA MASAYA!!!
CHIONGLO 3/4

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HMP!!!
WAG KANG SNUB, DAHIL ILANG ARAW LANG, SA 'KIN RIN ANG BAGSAK MO!
TATUMOSSER

ENTERTAINMENT

Last call for 'The Blue Room'

JENNY JAMORA stars in New Voice Company's "The Blue Room," the group's 2005 season opener, on its final weekend run today and tomorrow at the Republic of Malate. Written by David Hare, the play depicts the sexual relationships among 10 characters. Jamora is cast opposite Jamie Wilson. Evening performances at 9, Saturday matinee at 4 p.m. For tickets, call 896-6695.

Side A back in Hyatt

SIDE A

IN THE LATE 1980s, Hyatt Regency's Calesa Bar drew in the crowds with a group of preppy boys with freshly scrubbed looks, singing anything from Toto to Sting and doing it with astonishing flair. The group was Side A, now among the top live bands and recording stars in the country. Side A returns to Calesa Bar all Mondays of the month—March 7, 14, 21 and 28.

SHOW TIME

15-CD launch

A RARE collection of 15 CDs featuring violinist Carmencita Lozada will be launched today, 4 p.m. at the Metropolitan Museum in Manila.

Sponsored by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the recordings cover some 30 years of Lozada's live and recorded performances. She is the only Filipino to win two major prizes in two editions of the Paganini Competitions in Genoa, Italy, considered the Olympics for violinists.

Lozada has performed with The Hague Philharmonic, Rotterdom Philharmonic, Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, and Berlin Symphony Orchestra.

On top of violin masterpieces by Bach, Brahms, Mozart and Beethoven, the recordings also showcases major works of Filipino composers Alfredo Buenaventura, Lucino Sacramento, and Felipe de Leon.

Call 901-7156.

For a cause

CATALINO Flores

BARITONE and pianist Filmer Catalino F. Flores V will perform at the Philamlife Auditorium, UN Avenue, Manila tomorrow, 6 p.m. His repertoire includes works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Buencamino, Custodio, and Santiago. Flores has performed in Moscow, Rome and the United States. He taught piano at the University of the Philippines and at the St. John's School and Chung Ching Middle School, both in Brunei Darussalam. He was the lone Filipino member of the Moscow Oratorio from 1994 to 1996. Tomorrow's concert is for the benefit of cancer patients. Tickets are at P200, with a 50 percent discount for students. Call 897-9544.

'My Fair Lady'

THE GILOPEZ Kabayao Foundation presents Lerner & Loewe's "My Fair Lady" tomorrow, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., at the Fleur de Lis Auditorium of St. Paul University-Manila (680 Pedro Gil, Malate).

Rodolfo Cabada plays Professor Higgins. and Farida Kabayao is Eliza Doolitle. Others in the cast are Edgar Javison, Jon Jainga, Alain Opida and Elsie Flores Gancia. Joan Paulette "JP" Marie Libo-on directs. Call 536-6221.

'Basketball Fight'

THE FOURTH year Mass Communication Students of Adamson University (San Marcelino, Ermita) presents "Basketball Fight" on Monday at the university's SV Little Theater. The play stars Catherine Mojica, Cynthia de Jesus, Jefferson Morales and Winnie Reblora. Juan Paul Mendoza directs. Artistic director is Prof. Jose B. Dividina.

The Company at Hard Rock

THE COMPANY performs at the Hard Rock Café in Makati on March 11, 17 and 31. Also this month, the group will release the second single, "Ang Huling El Bimbo," from their latest album, "Mahal Kong Radyo." On Oct. 1 and 2, The Company celebrates its 20th year in the entertainment industry with a series of concerts at the Main Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

'Brittania Rocks'

STREETSCAPE, Shangri-La Plaza's outdoor entertainment park, is the venue for "Brittania Rocks" to mark the Philippine-British Arts Month. Performers include John Lesaca, John Y Cash and The Jukebox (March 5), Judith Banal and Evolution (March 12), Retrospect (March 19).

There's also Big Nite Out tonight, the group Focus on March 11, and D'Soul on March 18. All shows start at 9:30 p.m.

Call 633-7851

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HITCH THE CURE FOR THE COMMON MAN

MTRCB RATING: PG 13

Catch Will Smith as he stars as Alex "HITCH" Hitchens, a legendary New York City "date doctor" who, for a fee has helped hundreds of men woo the women of their dreams in a matter of 3 well-planned dates!

See **Will Smith** in this **laugh-out-loud** romantic comedy now showing at **SM Cinemas!**

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MILLION DOLLAR BABY
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

HITCH
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

LITTLE BLACK BOOK
MTRCB Rating: PG 13

LOVE ME IF YOU DARE
MTRCB Rating: R13

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GUARANTEED SEATS

the podium cinema
1. HITCH
11:05 ES / 1:45 MF / 2:15 / 4:45 / 7:15 9:15 LFS / 9:45 LMF / 11:14S END
2. MILLION DOLLAR BABY
12:50 LFS / 1:25 MF / 4:10 / 6:55 9:10 LFS / 9:40 LMF / 11:15 END
☎ 633-8976

sm megamall cinema 1
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
12:00 LFS / 12:30 MF / 2:50 LFS 3:20 LMF / 5:40 END
☎ 633-1901

sm cebu cinema 1
INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL FILM FESTIVAL
☎ (032) 231-3876

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 CONSTANTINE
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 HITCH
5 THE AVIATOR
6 LOVE ME IF YOU DARE smcinemaexclusive
7 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 BUNSHINSABA
11 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
12 INFECTION

sm city fairview
1 LITTLE BLACK BOOK smcinemaexclusive
2 INFECTION
3 DREAMBOY
4 CONSTANTINE
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 THE AVIATOR
7 HITCH
8 SON OF THE MASK
9 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
10 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
11 ELEKTRA
12 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city north edsa
1 THE AVIATOR
2 SON OF THE MASK
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 INFECTION
5 BUNSHINSABA
6 CONSTANTINE
7 HITCH
8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

sm city manila
1 HITCH
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3 BUNSHINSABA
4 THE AVIATOR
5 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
6 CONSATINTINE
7 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 DREAMBOY
11 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12 INFECTION

sm city sta. mesa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
5 CONSTANTINE
6 BUNSHINSABA
7 HITCH
8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 THE AVIATOR

sm city southmall
1 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 BUNSHINSABA
6 THE AVIATOR
7 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
8 CONSTANTINE
9 SON OF THE MASK
10 HITCH

sm city bicutan
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 SON OF THE MASK
3 HITCH
4 CONSTANTINE

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 CONSTANTINE
2 HITCH
3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 SON OF THE MASK

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 CONSTANTINE
2 HITCH
3 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 INFECTION
5 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

sm city baguio
1 RAISE YOUR VOICE
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 CONSTANTINE
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

sm city batangas
1 THE AVIATOR
2 RACING STRIPES
3 CONSTANTINE
4 SAKSI.. DRIVER

sm city dasmariñas
1 HITCH
2 CONSTANTINE
3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 THE AVIATOR

sm city bacoor
1 SAKSI.. DRIVER
2 INFECTION
3 SON OF THE MASK
4 THE AVIATOR
5 CONSTANTINE
6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
7 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
8 HITCH

sm city marilao
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 INFECTION
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 CONSTANTINE

sm city lucena
1 CONSTANTINE
2 THE AVIATOR
3 SAKSI..DRIVER
4 BIRTH

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL FILM FESTIVAL
2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL FILM FESTIVAL
6 ALFIE
7 SON OF THE MASK
8 CONSTANTINE

sm city iloilo
1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 RESERVED
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
5 CONSTANTINE
6 LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
7 RESERVED
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city davao
1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 RACING STRIPES
4 MAD HOUSE
5 WITHOUT A PADDLE
6 CONSTANTINE

sm city cagayan de oro
1 CONSTANTINE
2 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
3 MAD HOUSE
4 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

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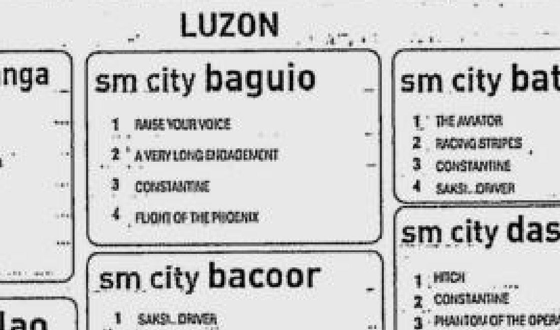

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1	LEMONY SNICKETS: (SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS)	12:30, 3:10, 5:50 8:30, 11:00	GP
2	HITCH	12:10, 2:55, 5:40 8:25, 11:05	GP
3	MILLION DOLLAR BABY	11:30, 2:30, 5:30 8:25, 11:15	PG-13
4	CONSTANTINE	11:55, 2:45, 5:35 8:25, 11:10	PG-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA

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CONSTANTINE PG13 1:45,4:30,7:15,10:00	MILLION DOLLAR BABY PG13 11:30,2:10,4:50,7:30,10:15	LEMONY SNICKET'S UNFORTUNATE EVENTS GP 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10
AVIATOR PG13 12:50,4:00,7:10,10:20	RAY PG13 12:50,3:50,6:50,9:50	HITCH PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30

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CINEMA 1 HITCH 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:05 PG13

CINEMA 2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 10:50, 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10 PG13

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SHANG CINEPLEX

① HITCH
MTRCB PG-13
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00 LMF

② LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
MTRCB GP
11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF

③ MILLION DOLLAR BABY
MTRCB PG-13
12:20, 3:15, 6:10, 9:05 LMF

④ CONSTANTINE
MTRCB PG-13
10:40, 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00 LMF

PREMIERE THEATRE AVIATOR
MTRCB PG-13 10:40 2:00 5:20 9:00 LMF
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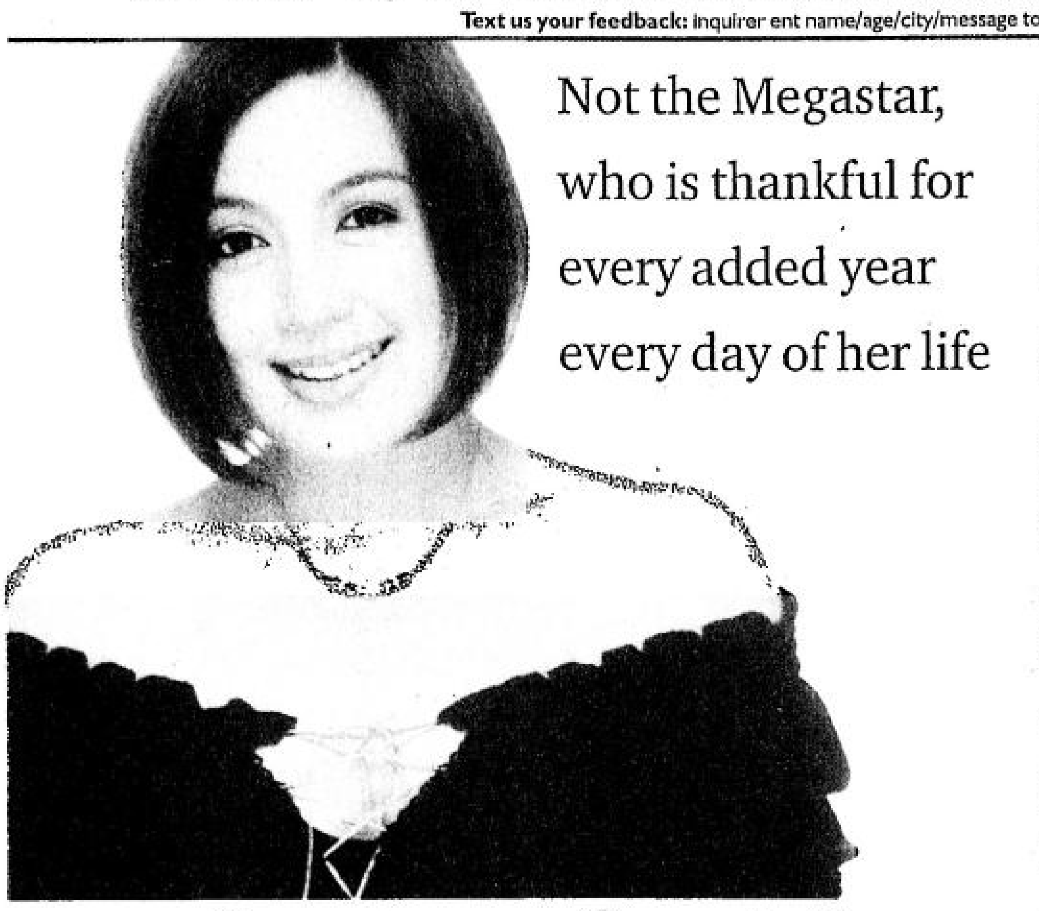

Not the Megastar, who is thankful for every added year every day of her life

Who's afraid of growing old?

By Nini Valera

SHARON Cuneta, who celebrated her 39th birthday last January with a marathon gift-giving special on ABS-CBN, does not mind growing older.

"Remember when we were young and we thought 30 was ancient?" she told INQUIRER Entertainment. "But all of a sudden, 30 became like 20. Now they say 40 is the new 30.

"I'm not in a hurry to get there. But knowing what I know now, I'm happy that I've gone through life in a good way.

"I don't really have much to complain about. I'm happy in a way, that I was really mad about myself when I was only 23. Like, how did I get to be like this? I did that every year. Then I turned 39 and I realized, my God, a lot of people lost their lives in the tsunami. We should all be living our life, not complaining. We're supposed to be thankful for each year that we have."

Last January, Sharon received the Best Actress trophy from the Brussels Film Festival for her role in "Crying Ladies," directed by Mark Meily, in ceremonies held at the Belgian ambassador's house in Forbes Park, Makati. She shared the award with Nora 'Aunor for Director Maryo J. delos Reyes' "Naglalayag," which won a special jury award. Yul Servo was named Best Actor award for his role in the latter movie.

"This is my first acting award for ['Crying Ladies']," said Sharon. "I won the People's Choice Award in the Metro Manila Film Festival the year the movie was shown. Now, I won it in a tie with an actress as great as Nora Aunor, and that's really, wow."

No expectations

Even during the local film fest, she recalled, she didn't think she would win for her role as a hustler trying to keep her son.

"I was just hoping that the movie would get some form of recognition," said Sharon. "I was not thinking of myself, but of the movie. This is Direk Mark's first movie, and it was really special because it was also from Tony Gloria's Unitel. So I wanted it to make a mark."

Sharon would have been a production partner of Unitel for "Crying Ladies," except that she was remodeling her house at the time the movie was being shot.

"So I told Mr. Gloria that I'd save up and [invest in] his next project."

That project is "Pasyon," a comedy, which stars Robin Padilla. Sharon confided that she did not hesitate whatsoever about this undertaking.

Role model

"I would not have put my money in Unitel if not for him (Tony Gloria), who's so decent and kind, and the kind of producer I dream of becoming," said Sharon. "He's super decent. I couldn't have [done this] with anybody else. He's like my mentor now in producing."

She described herself as a conservative when it comes to business. She revealed: "I've made lots of mistakes. I think I trusted people totally. When you're too good, they abuse you. When you're mean, they don't like it. I'm basically a happy-go-lucky good person, and I think a lot of people take advantage of that. I can't really take running a business, and dealing with people of different temperaments. I'm not shrewd and it gets me into trouble."

Sharon owns a fashion line franchise, but lets a cousin run the business.

"That's the only business I have now," she said. "I had to give up the others because I could not take the headache. I have always been my own business, and I am used to stress brought on by my show biz career. But these are stresses I've grown up with. As long as I work hard, and I don't let the bad press get to me, if I'm true to myself and my feet are on the ground, then I'm fine."

WHO'S/ A3-2

Golden Screen Awards tomorrow

LOCAL AWARDS season starts with the Entertainment Press Society's (Enpress) Annual Golden Screen Awards tomorrow, 7 p.m.

The program, set at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, will be telecast on GMA7 at 10:30 p.m.

MTV Asia VJ Donita Rose will host the rites. Actress Maricel Soriano takes center stage in a tribute to the late Fernando Poe Jr.

Phillip Salvador and Eddie Garcia will present the Gawad Lino Brocka Lifetime Achievement Award to multi-awarded actress Mona Lisa.

CM Films' "Panaghoy Sa Suba" and MLR Films' "Minsan Pa" each got 12 nominations in the Drama category. Viva Films' "Annie B.: Bida Ny Ukay-Ukay, Bongga Ka 'Day" got five nominations in the Musical/Comedy category.

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ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 HITCH	1 SON OF THE MASK	1 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2 45, 5 35, 8 25, 11 15	1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	2 HITCH	2 LEMONY SNICKET'S	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 HITCH 1 20, 3 50, 6 20, 8 50, 11 20	2 ALFIE
3 CONSTANTINE	3 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2 00, 4 50, 7 40, 10 30	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 LEMONY SNICKET'S 2 10, 4 30, 6 50, 9 10, 11 30	3 CONSTANTINE
4 LEMONY SNICKET'S	4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	4 BUNSHINBA	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 CONSTANTINE 1 50, 4 15, 6 40, 9 15, 11 30	4 SON OF THE MASK
5 THE AVIATOR		5 SON OF THE MASK	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE AVIATOR 1 45, 5 00, 8 15, 11 30	5
		6 HITCH		
		7 THE AVIATOR		

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 12 30, 3 20, 6 10, 9 00
2 HITCH 12 20, 2:45, 5 10, 7:35 10:00

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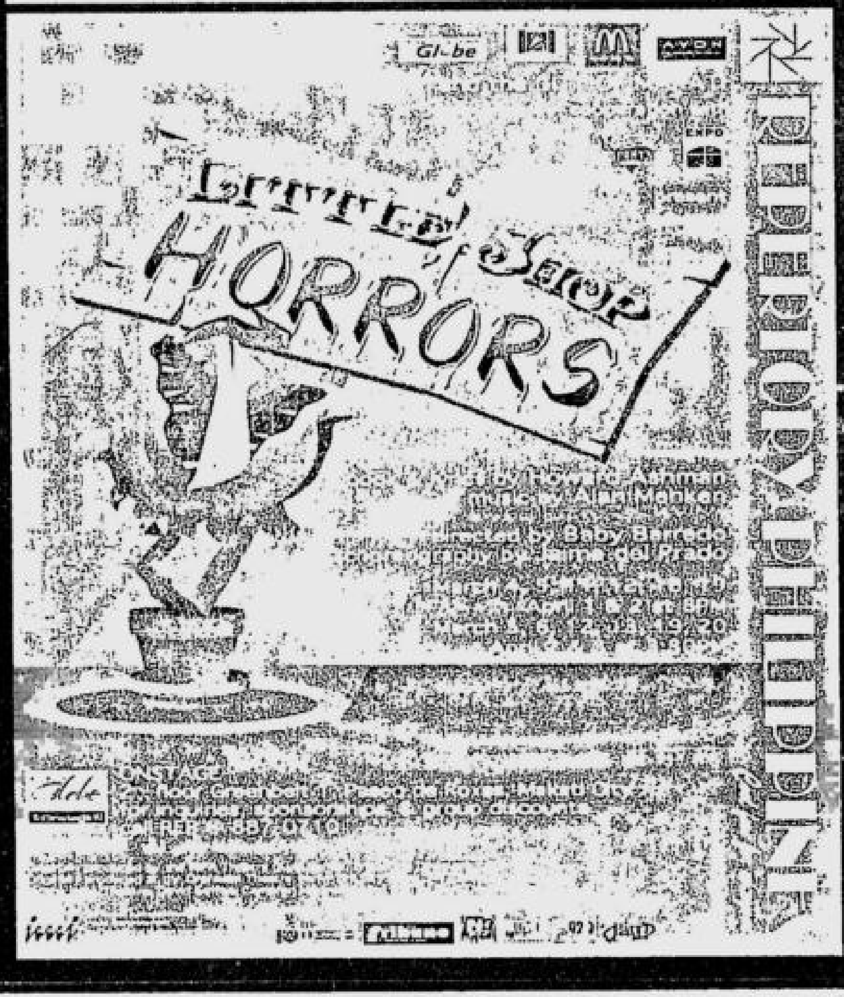

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Feb 20, 11:30AM, 2:30PM 4:30PM & 6:30PM
Feb 22, Meet&Greet Glorietta 2 lobby
Glorietta Activity Center
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TOWN

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"Brooks makes Spanglish a rich blend of humor and heartbreak."
— Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"Spanglish is a performer's showcase."
— Mike Clark, USA TODAY

Flor (Paz Vega), a beautiful, native Mexican woman becomes the housekeeper for the affluent, yet troubled, Clasky family (headed by Adam Sandler and Téa Leoni). The result is a wittily perceptive collision of cultures and values, and a refreshingly honest look at such life-altering commitments as marriage, parenting and devotion to family.

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

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From the writer / director of TERMS OF ENDEARMENT and BROADCAST NEWS and the director of AS GOOD AS IT GETS

Spanglish

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 CONSTANTINE • THX 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00	6 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 10:20 1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00
2 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	7 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 12:40 3:40 6:40 9:40
3 SON OF THE MASK 2 10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00	8 INFECTION 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
4 BUNSHINSABA 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00	9 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
5 HITCH 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	10 MEET THE FOCKERS 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 HITCH	10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 SON OF THE MASK 2 10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45	5 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 CONSTANTINE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	6 BUNSHINSABA 10:30 12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00
4 INFECTION 10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45	7 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 10:50 1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 INFECTION 10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50	5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 10:25 1:25 4:25 7:25 10:30
2 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00	6 HITCH 11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00	7 CONSTANTINE 10:35 1:05 3:35 6:05 8:20 10:30
4 SON OF THE MASK 2 12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:30	8 BUNSHINSABA *(OUIJA BOARD)* 10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 8:50 10:30

NOVALICHES 835-3229/31

1 CONSTANTINE 11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25	5 RAY 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 8:55
2 HITCH 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 8:55	6 SIDEWAYS 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 8:55
3 FOOTSTEPS 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55	7 RESERVE
4 SON OF THE MASK 2 11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:25	8 RESERVE

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1 HITCH	3 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
2 CONSTANTINE	4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-257	CAINTA 240-4661
1 SHALL WE DANCE	1 HITCH
2 CONSTANTINE	2 SIDEWAYS
3 INFECTION	3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 NIGHT JOB	4 CONSTANTINE

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March 02 - March 08

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1 CONSTANTINE	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 INFECTION	2 RACING STRIPES
3 SAKSI DRIVER	3 CONSTANTINE
4 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS	4 HELLWOLF
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	5 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332	ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 HITCH	1 HITCH
2 NIGHT JOB	2 INFECTION
3 CONSTANTINE	3 CONSTANTINE
4 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	4 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
5 RACING STRIPES	

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188	STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 HITCH	1 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
2 SON OF THE MASK 2	2 SAKSI...DRIVER
3 SAKSI...DRIVER	3 INFECTION
4 CONSTANTINE	4 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	5 HITCH
6 HELLWOLF	6 CONSTANTINE

BACOLOD (034) 441-0463 (034) 441-0460	ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 CONSTANTINE	1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 MEET THE FOCKERS	2 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13	3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 SIDEWAYS	4 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
5 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 SHALL WE DANCE	6 CONSTANTINE

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Mel Gibsor starts with

SUVA, Fiji—Hollywood star and director Mel Gibson could face a legal challenge from a landless tribe of indigenous Fijians to his reported bid to buy an island they claim was stolen from their ancestors.

The director of "The Passion of the Christ" and star of the "Mad Max" movies is believed to have bought the 2,164-hectare Mago island from Japan's Tokyu Corp. for around $15 million.

Fiji's Department of Lands said this week it was still waiting for the sale documents to be lodged with it, so the land title to the island could be transferred to the new owner.

The tribe of 500 landless villagers from Mago Island in Fiji's remote northern Lau island group are raising funds to challenge the sale, the Fiji Times newspaper reported.

Villagers of Namalatu on nearby Vanuabalavu island are fund-raising to hire a lawyer to challenge the sale of the home island they were forced to flee in the 19th century.

"Our island was sold for 2,000 coconut plants, and stories told by our forefathers are that they were forced to leave at gunpoint," Namalatu Development Committee chair Timoci Waqalevu told the paper this week.

WITH little daughters Frank

Sharon: W of growing

From page A3-1

Sharon Cuneta, the business, has had a 26- year run and shows no sign of slowing down. For 10 of those years, Sharon has earned the singular title of Megastar.

"I don't know how long I've been Megastar, I haven't really counted. I'm just so happy that people still accept me whatever I look like and no matter how much I weigh," she joked.

She said she was set to go on a diet soon, but that breast-feeding her 5-month-old daughter Miel was her current priority.

Commitment

"My commitment is to breast-feed Miel for at least six months," said Sharon. "If I had not put on so much weight during my pregnancy, maybe I could breast-feed for two years. But I have a career to attend to. Realistically, you have to be a whole woman to be happy. My commitment is six months of pure breast-feeding."

Since she started having children, Sharon said, weight had always been her problem. "It's not like I need to have something done [on my face]. It's not about that. I feel like I still look 25. I appreciate that there are now ways now of delaying the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

's passion Fiji island

"There is still evidence of those who refused to leave and were killed. There is a dugout hole where their skeletons still remain," Waqalevu said.

Tribe members still living at Namalatu, a rocky outcrop of Vanuabalavu where they are regarded as aliens by the traditional landowners, have dwindled to 98 in recent years.

Buy it back?

The villagers have asked the government to use a plan that allows it to help people buy back ancestral land.

But Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, himself from Vanuabalavu, said the government won't interfere with the sale of freehold property.

"The sale was between the owner who has found a willing buyer," he said. "The government cannot do anything because it is a freehold property."

Namalatu villagers said the land they live on belongs to another tribe that eventually will want it back.

"It is sad, we are Fijians with no land," Waqalevu said.

Some 90 percent of land in Fiji is still in the ownership of the indigenous Fijian people, who make up some 51 percent of the population. *AP*

ie and Miel

o's afraid old?

aging process. But I'm scared to look waxy. Right now, I don't think I need [cosmetic surgery]."

Good genes

She credits this to good genes. "My Mommy (Elaine Cuneta) ... you wouldn't think she's her age. She would never reveal her age so I won't tell you," Sharon laughed.

"If I have things done someday—and that's not totally out of the picture—if I find a doctor who wouldn't make me look like a mannequin or generic ... like everyone else ... I'd go for surgery. I feel I owe it to my audience. But right now, I feel I'm blessed with good genes."

She wanted to have a son, Sharon confided. Just the same, she was ecstatic about having Miel.

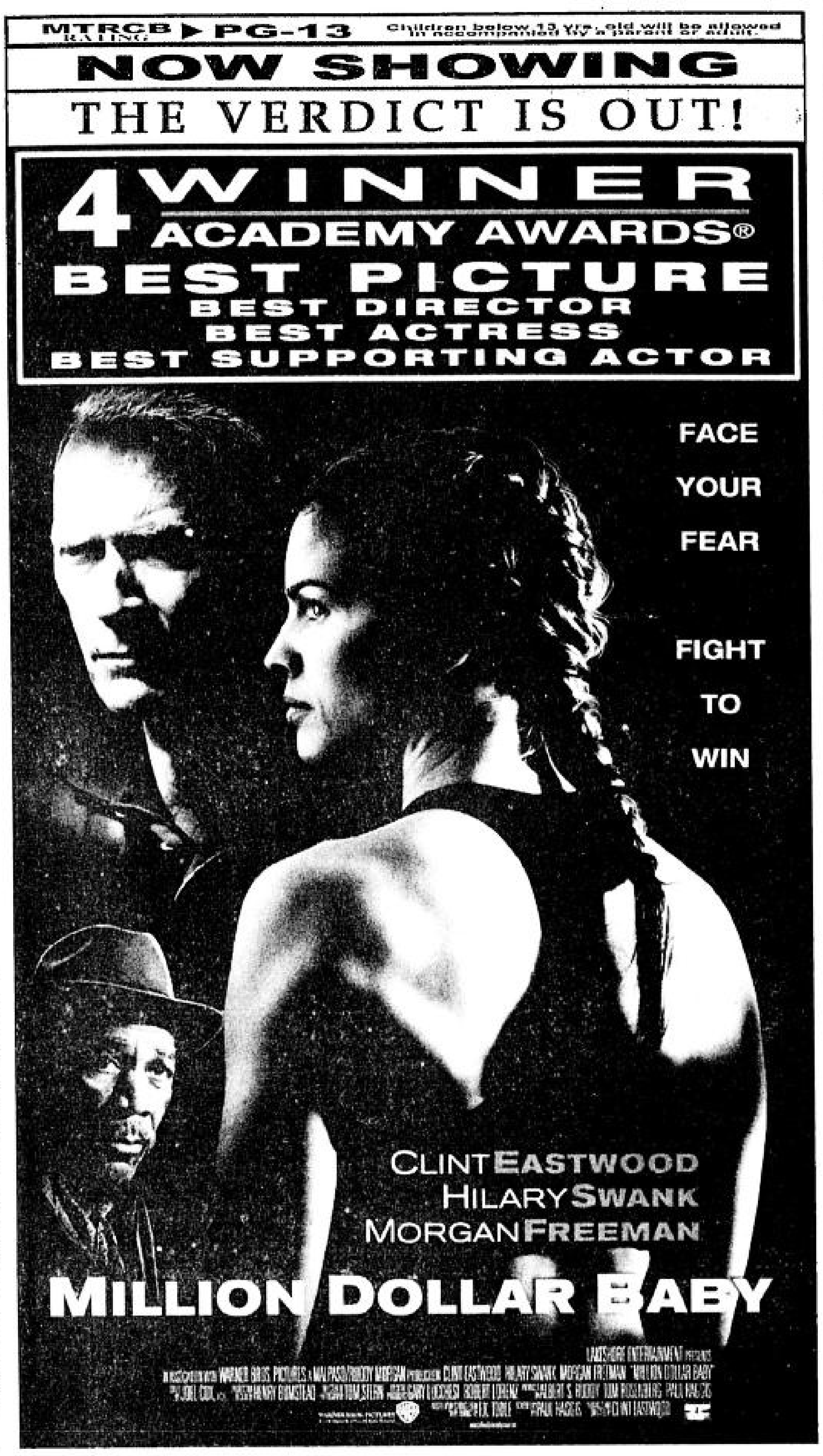
"I used to long for a son," she said. "But I [already] have five nephews. When I found out that I was going to have another girl, I was happy."

Sharon has three daughters now—KC, 20, by former husband Gabby Concepcion; and by Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Frankie, 4, and Miel.

"I'm crazy about my girls," she said. "They help me in the kitchen, we have so much fun together."

DID YOU KNOW...

ABS-CBN talents Angelica Panganiban and Ketsup Eusebio were spotted watching "Constantine" at the Alabang Town Center last week—but they were with their respective non-show biz dates.



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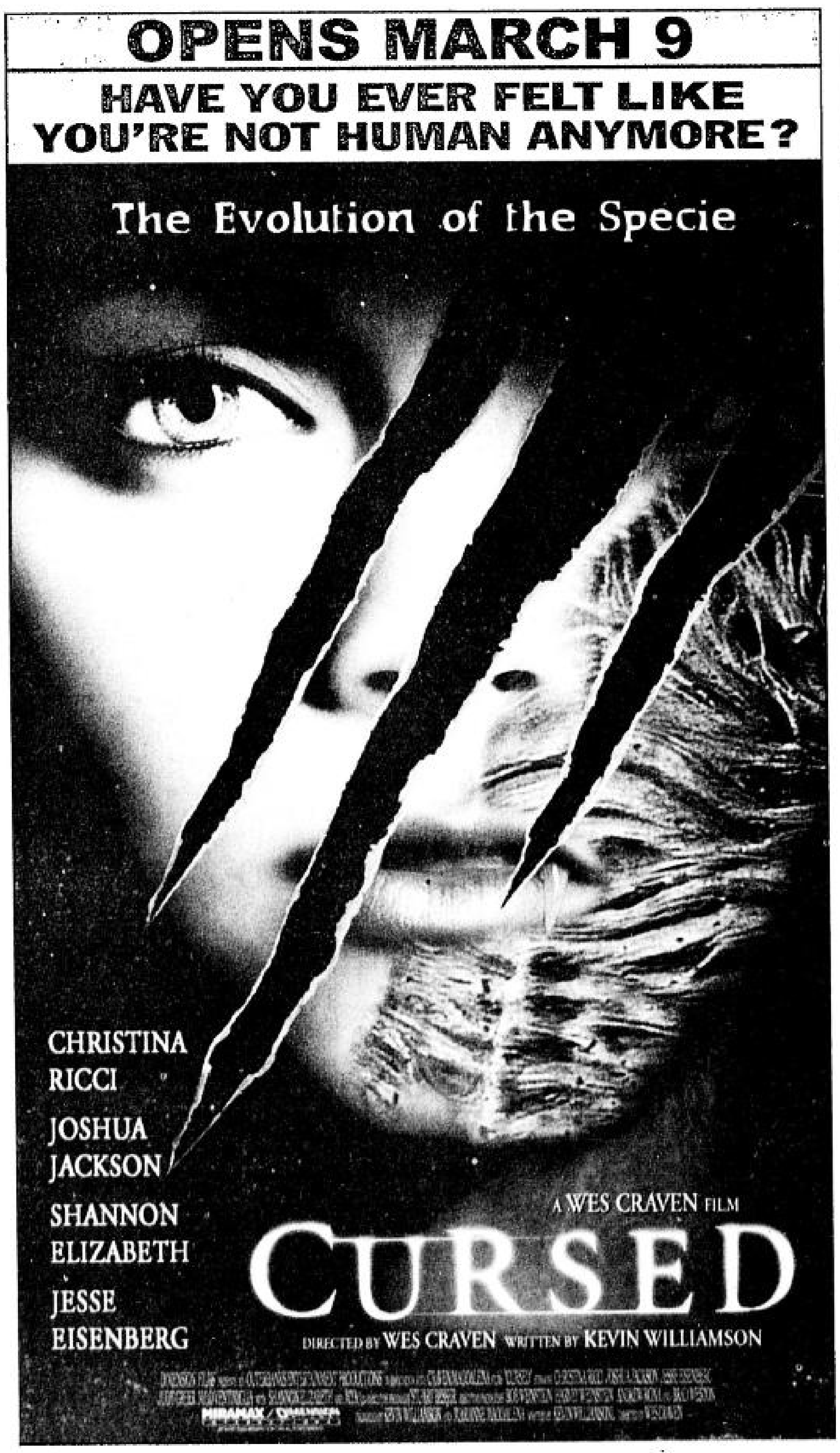

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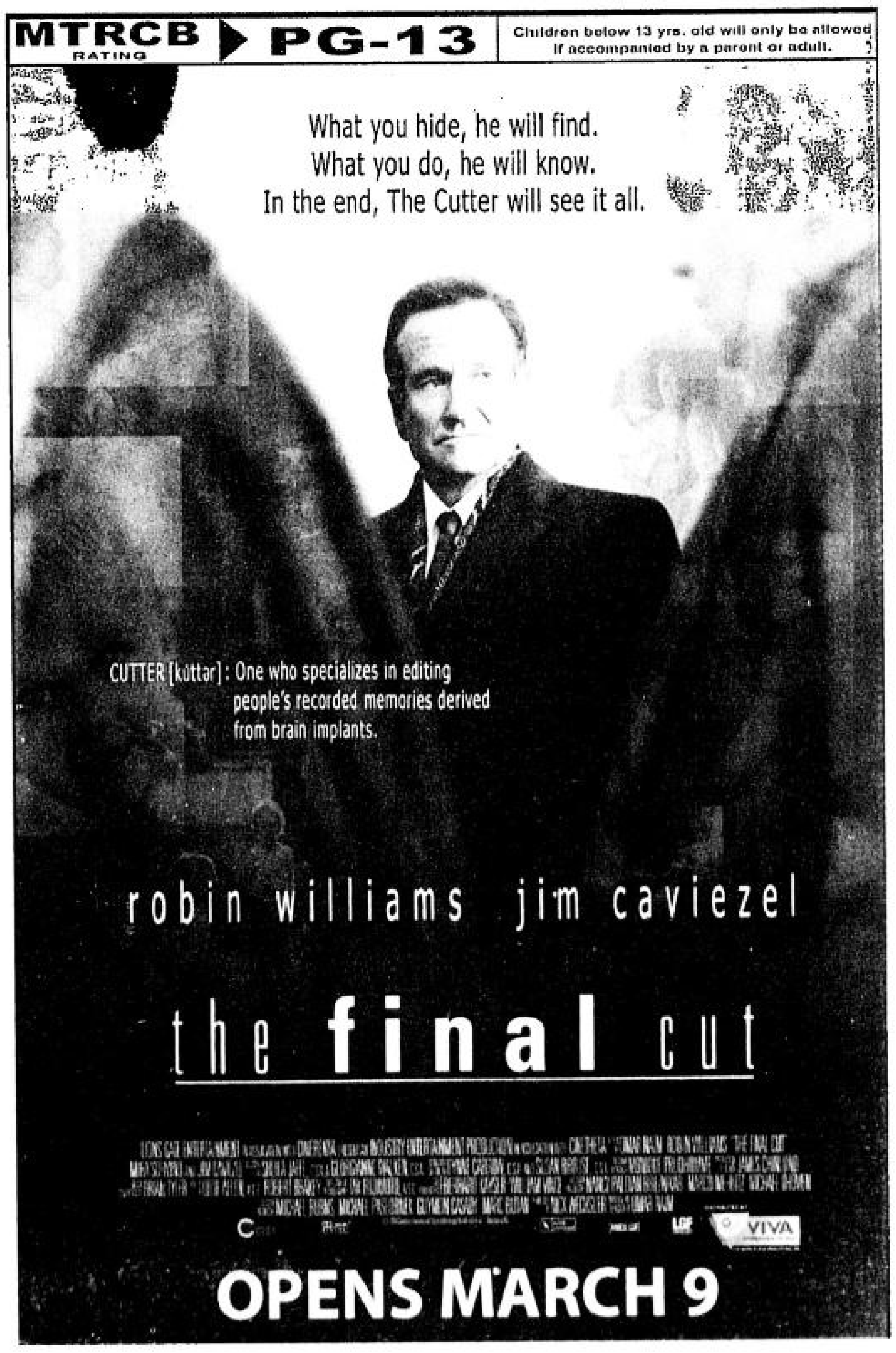

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Gossip debases the gossipmonger

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE'RE glad that our recent notes on the excessive focus on gossip in the media has helped some people realize that we have indeed been taking things too far in this regard.

We've been asked for additional notes on the subject, and we're happy to oblige, because we feel that our ferocious fixation on gossip demeans not only the people we so viciously flagellate and excoriate, but ourselves as well.

In fact, we can go further and say: Gossip kills. Not physically, of course, although some victims of gossip have been driven to suicide, but psychologically and psychically, as many others grieve over their tattered reputation.

In the ethical realm, we've heard some priests strongly declare that rumor-mongering gossiping and character-assassination are sins, because they are psychic acts of emotional violence.

Even if the gossip is true, our ethical mentors point out, it's still a sin to malign a person and delight in his psychological debasement.

Why? Because we're all children of God who are supposed to love and help each other, and thus deserve respect and understanding, not vitriolic, holier-than-thou condemnation. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone," and all that.

Even more reprehensible is the gossipmonger who *delights* in the embarrassment and pain of the person whose "shocking" secrets he's exposing.

In this connection, gossip columns and show biz talk shows on TV are major culprits. They not only dig up filth; they also love to rub it in their readers and viewers' faces. Even more depressingly, those readers and viewers delight in breathing in and masticating all of that smelly garbage!

Why? Because the nasty gossip is about show biz stars and other celebrities? Does the fact that they're famous or infamous imbue their fetid excesses with some perverse perfume that renders them excitingly seductive to inhale?

Please, desist. The "stellar" filth you're assimilating will become a part of *your* psyche, making you the stuff of garbage, too.

To us, this is the even deadlier effect of gossip, its corrosive and psychologically lethal ability to make unfeeling monsters of us all.

We believe that our excessive fascination with stellar dirt is one reason that we haven't been able to clean up our own act as a people. Mired in celebrity mud, and loving it, we're reduced to cultural carabaos who can't remember to pull the plow!

To get anywhere meaningful, we have to stop fixating on other people's "secrets," and focus instead on our need to act on the problems that confront us.

Among other heady but destructive fixes, gossip is the opium that prevents us from dealing with issues that *really* matter. To redeem ourselves, we must reject gossip, because it numbs, distracts, debases, corrodes—and kills.

Zuñiga zings

NONOY Zuñiga sings with his latest recording, "The Love Album," which comes just in the nick of time to remind everyone that Nonoy is one of our best and most vocally compelling balladeers.

The ace singer has packed his new album with meaningful songs that should bring back a lot of romantic memories. They include "What Matters Most," "I'll Be Seeing You," "Too Shy To Say," "Someone Who Cares," "The Way You Look Tonight," "I Only Have Eyes for You," "If," "Moon River," "Until It's Time for You to Go," and "When I Fall in Love," which he sings with **Regine Velasquez**.

Nonoy will perform songs from the album today at SM North Edsa, and tomorrow at SM Megamall. He marks his 25th anniversary as a solo performer this year.

***

FEEDBACK from **Morris Verano** of Cebu City: "After **Cesar Montano**'s 'Panaghoy sa Suba,' I hope more Cebuano movies will be made. How about a movie on Lapu-Lapu, or another Visayan hero?

"For a more contemporary flavor, the life story of **Pilita Corrales** would make a very interesting musical-drama-comedy film. Now that Montano has started the ball rolling, other Visayan producers should keep it going!"

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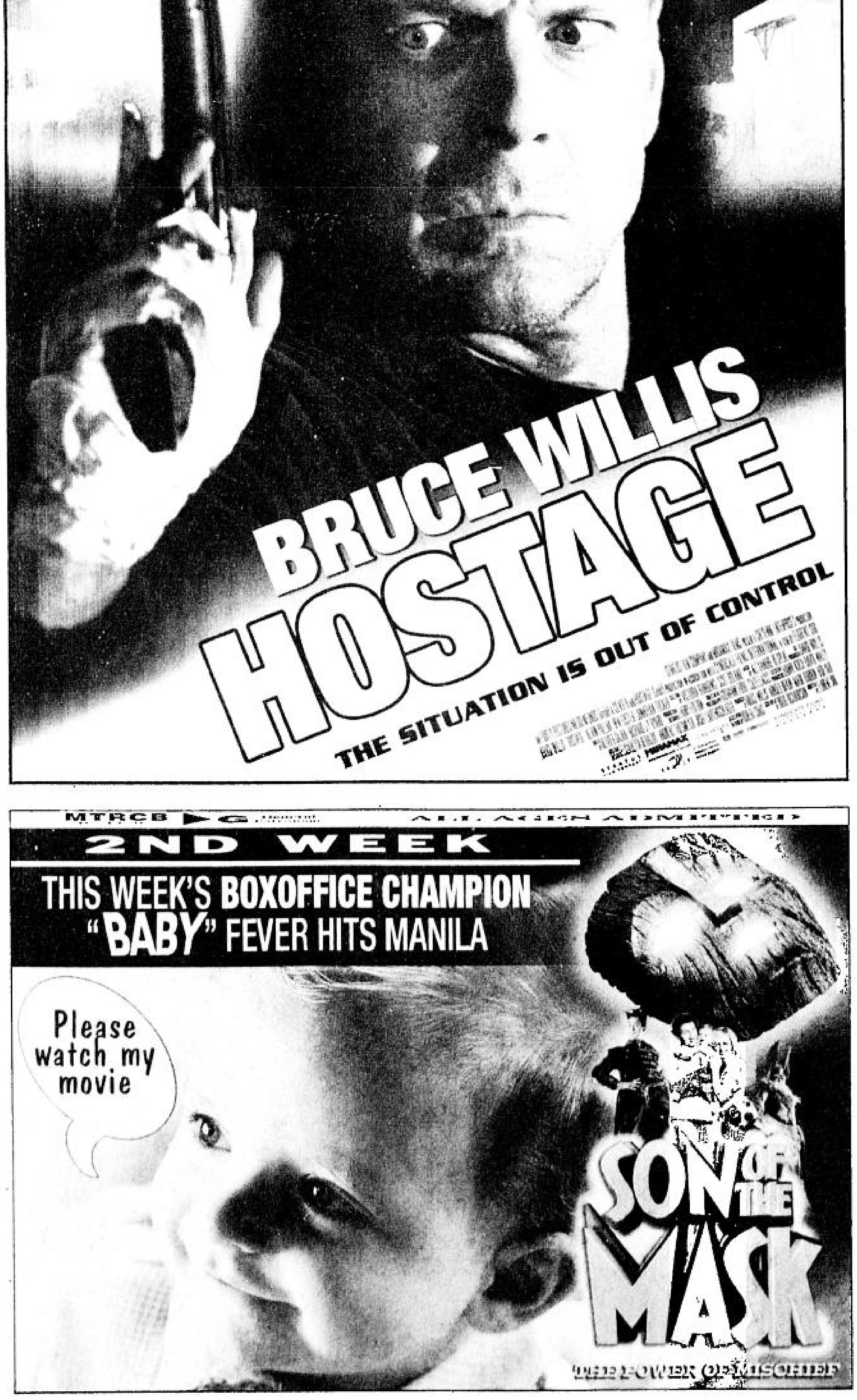

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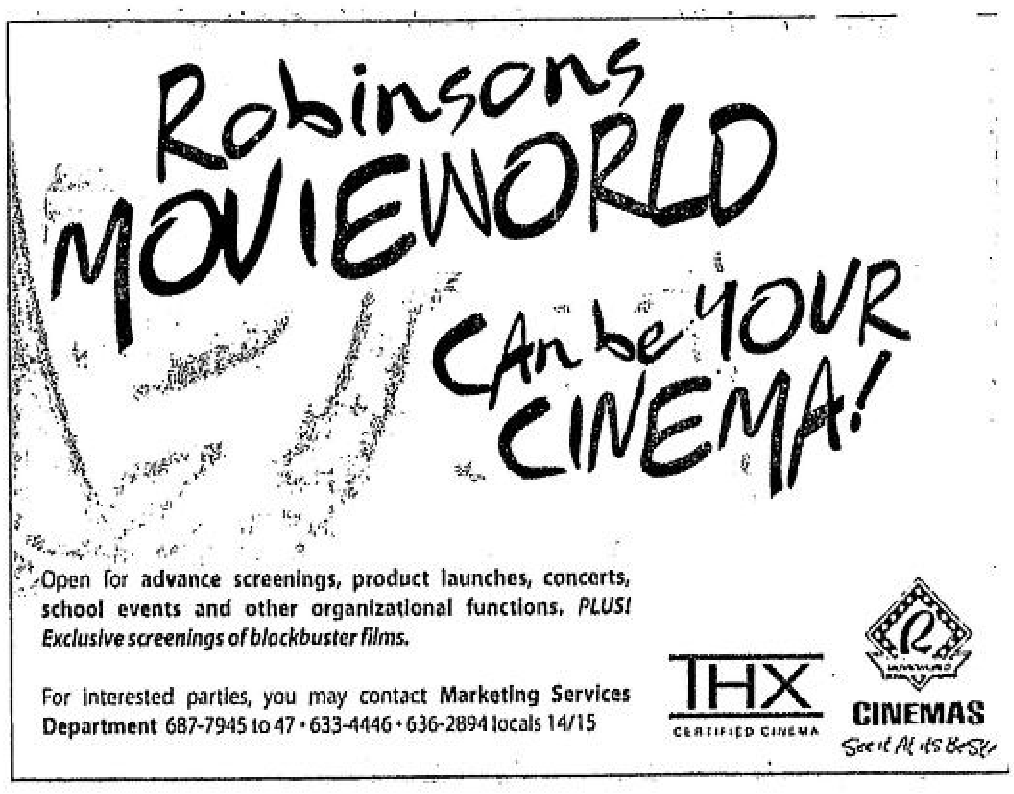

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Investors regain interest in RP securities

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL investors have regained their appetite for Philippine securities, which was dampened by the sovereign credit rating downgrades by Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investor Service.

Net foreign portfolio inflows to the country hit $253.8 million in the first three weeks of February, a 10-fold increase from $23.9 million in the same period last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

This brought the net foreign portfolio investments from January to Feb. 18 this year to $797.3 million, representing a sharp increase from the meager $63.6 million registered in the same period last year.

For the month of January, alone, "hot money" inflows reached $543.5 million despite the one-notch sovereign credit rating downgrade announced by S&P on Jan. 17. A month after, Moody's also slashed the Philippines' sovereign credit ratings by two notches, warning of heightened vulnerability to economic, financial and political shocks due to its ballooning public debts.

The downgrades jilted the markets in mid-February, but fund managers at Bank of the Philippine Islands said foreign investors had revived their interest in the local portfolio since then.

Fresh from an international roadshow, BPI Capital Corp. president Natividad Alejo said the strong market response to Manila Water Co.'s initial public offering, which attracted $900 million in demand from international investors, was an indication that the Philippines was really "back in the radar screen" of investors.

"People are looking at the Philippines with a new eye. They are now willing to give the government a chance to deliver," she said at the sidelines of the launching of BPI's ALFM Dollar Bond Fund, a mutual fund heavily invested in Philippine global bonds.

Fernando Sison, vice president of BPI Asset Management, added that any additional supply of government debt paper was unlikely to make a long-term dent in the prices of Philippine bonds.

The Philippine government said it was planning to borrow a total of $4 billion from foreign commercial sources for 2005 and has so far raised $1.5 billion. S&P, however, recently said the Philippine government might have to raise as much as $7 billion (P401 billion) from commercial borrowings this year, partly to support cash-strapped state corporations.

Philippine assets have shown strong performance after Congress approved recently the tax measures that were seen critical in addressing the country's budget shortfall.

Alejo said that even the "discerning" foreign investors were bullish on Philippine debt and equity papers.

She said BPI Capital was now making a pitch for some consumer companies to hold their IPOs.

Aside from Manila Water, SM Investments Inc. of mall magnate Henry Sy is now conducting an international roadshow for its IPO.

Other big companies keen on holding IPOs this year are Mirant Philippines and GMA Network Inc.

Bear, Stearns bullish on RP

By Michelle V. Remo

US-BASED investment bank Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. said 2005 would be a better year for the Philippine economy, compared to the previous year, as the government's revenue-raising measures were expected to result in the improvement in the country's fiscal position.

Bear, Stearns, in a paper on the Philippine economy, said the government might achieve a "home run" in combating its fiscal problem with the implementation of its fiscal-reform measures, especially those seeking an increase in the value-added tax (VAT) rate from 10 to 12 percent and the expansion of the VAT coverage.

The investment bank said it recognized that the VAT proposals were facing rough sailing in Congress amid strong lobbying by critics who claimed that the measures were anti-poor. But Bear, Stearns said Congress was still likely to pass even watered-down versions of the bills, a

BEAR/ B2

Single Point Parts (Thailand) Plc.

PSE CHAIR Alicia Arroyo joins top executives of the Stock Exchange of Thailand, led by SET chair Vijit Supinit, and Single Parts Inc., a leading hard disk parts producer, in a toast that marked the listing of the company under SET's Technology Industry Group. Arroyo visited SET for a brokers' observation tour.

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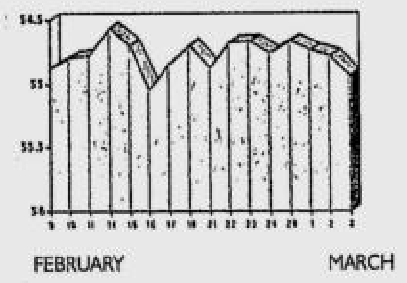


₱ 54.94 = $
As of 5 p.m., March 3, 2005

¥ 105.13 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 2, 2005

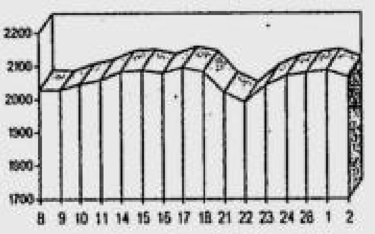
GOLD: $ 430.60-431.10
per ounce Hong Kong, March 2, 2005

March 3, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.761151	1.000000	54.7780
Japan	Yen	0.007274	0.009557	0.5235
United Kingdom	Pound	1.456919	1.914100	104.8506
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097593	0.128218	7.0235
Switzerland	Franc	0.648561	0.852079	46.6752
Canada	Dollar	0.614823	0.807754	44.2471
Singapore	Dollar	0.468372	0.615347	33.7075
Australia	Dollar	0.595906	0.782901	42.8858
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.019021	2.652590	145.3036
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202968	0.266660	14.6071
Brunei	Dollar	0.466935	0.613459	33.6041
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.019852	0.026082	1.4287
UAE	Dirham	0.207240	0.272272	14.9145
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.313800	71.9673
Argentina	Peso	0.258017	0.338983	18.5688
Brazil	Real	0.289797	0.380735	20.8559
Denmark	Kroner	0.134365	0.176529	9.6699
India	Rupee	0.017462	0.022941	1.2567
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.200330	0.263193	14.4172
Mexico	New Peso	0.068686	0.090240	4.9432
New Zealand	Dollar	0.552439	0.725795	39.7576
Norway	Kroner	0.121860	0.160100	8.7700
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012834	0.016861	0.9236
South Africa	Rand	0.129063	0.169563	9.2883
Korea	Won	0.000756	0.000993	0.0544
Sweden	Kroner	0.110264	0.144865	7.9354
Syria	Pound	0.014663	0.019264	1.0552
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024761	0.032531	1.7820
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000397	0.000522	0.0286

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.20% higher

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARE prices yesterday closed 1.20 percent higher on a technical rebound led by strong buying interest in dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT), dealers said.

They said small-capitalization stocks with strong recovery prospects also gained a lift while two major initial public offerings of Manila Water and SM Investments later this month also boosted investor interest in local equities.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 24.85 points to 2,093.27. It traded between 2,064.47 and 2,096.86. Turnover reached 2.85 billion shares worth P2.05 billion.

The broader all-shares index fell 2.43 points to 1,188.90.

Gainers beat losers 56 to 45, with 55 stocks unchanged.

"The market is still in a buying mode, although interest has shifted to lower-tiered stocks. Some investors are also saving their funds for shares of Manila Water Co and SM Investments," Ron Rodrigo of Accord Capital Equities said.

Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com said: "This is momentum driven. Investors remain bullish on Philippine companies, although they are also preparing for correction along the way."

A Soriano Corp. was top-traded, rising 28 centavos to P2.26 .

PLDT rose P30 to P1,410 , while rival Globe Telecom was up P5 to P935. *AFP*

LRTA sees P2.8B in earnings

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority yesterday said it was expecting its revenue from rail operations to increase by 70 percent this year to P2.8 billion from P1.66 billion in 2004.

But even if the LRTA would include its projected non-rail revenue of about P145 million this year, the railway agency would still be short of funds to settle about P3.4 billion in maturing debts in 2005, according to its administrator Mel Robles.

It is for this reason that the LRTA wants to implement a P10 fare hike in the coming months.

"Even if we increase our revenue, we will still be in the negative because we're paying interest charges for our loans. We are servicing loans contracted for the construction of Lines 1 and 2," said Eleanor Domingo, LRTA finance head

She said the average debt service requirement of between P3.3 billion and P3.4 billion this year would include maturing principal obligations.

Last year's revenue of P1.66 billion was 32 percent higher than the P1.26 billion in 2003.

Robles said the increase in sales followed the start of operations of Line 2.

However, revenue last year was lower than the P2.28 billion that the agency had projected for 2004. *Clarissa S. Batino*

INTEREST RATES

March 3, 2005-MART1
Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 3-Mar-05	MART 1 2-Mar-05
1 Month	6.9143	6.8946
3 Months	6.9661	6.9696
6 Months	7.9263	7.925
1 Year	8.95	8.95
2 Years	9.9083	9.9267
3 Years	10.6018	10.6067
4 Years	11.12	11.1367
5 Years	11.4413	11.4339
7 Years	12.1483	12.1018
10 Years	12.4417	12.4357
20 Years	13.005	13.0089
25 Years	13.955	13.9679

Insurance sector too heavily taxed, says study

By Michelle V. Remo

TOO MUCH taxes imposed on the insurance industry were to blame for the Filipinos' lack of interest in securing their future, said Edwin Pineda, senior economist of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P).

Many Filipinos find insurance expensive, and that discourage them from getting themselves and their families insurance covers the way other nationals do. As a result, the insurance industry in the Philippines has lagged far behind its counterparts in the Asia-Pacific region.

During the presentation of his study on the insurance industry yesterday, Pineda said the premium-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio in the Philippines was only 1 percent, or only half of the 2-percent average in the region, and way below the 8 percent in Japan.

"We are one of the few countries that impose taxes on insurance premiums, no wonder our insurance industry is one of the most under-performing in the region," he said.

On a per-capita basis, Pineda said, each Filipino spends only an average of $6.6 for insurance premium. The per capita spending for insurance is five times bigger in Thailand, 20 times bigger in Malaysia and over 400 times bigger in Japan, he said.

To stress how heavily the Philippine insurance industry is taxed, Pineda identified three stages when taxes were imposed on the insurance business. The first is when an insurance company collects premium payments from clients. Under this stage, an insurance firm should pay a 5-percent premium tax, and a documentary stamp tax (DST) of P2.50 for every P1,000 worth of premium.

The second stage is when the insurance company invests the premiums it collected in various investment outlets, like equities and securities markets. Insurance firms pay an average of 8-percent tax on these investment activities.

The third stage is when the insurance company reports its total corporate income, which is levied a 32-percent income tax.

Pineda, who admitted operating his own insurance company, said the insurance industry should be relieved from some of these taxes, particularly on insurance premiums, to make it competitive.

In the United States, he said, the amount of insurance premium was even deductible from one's taxable income. Pineda said the government could help make Filipinos develop the habit of securing their future by removing some of those taxes and, thereby, make insurance more affordable.

"If we want people to save, why are we taxing premiums? It's as if we are discouraging people from getting an insurance," he said.

For its part, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said the insurance industry was being taxed just like the other industries. A BIR official explained that the 5-percent premium tax was equivalent to the 10-percent value-added tax slapped on other businesses.

In the meantime, Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said the government had already eased the tax burden of insurance companies when the BIR came up with a new system of computing the DST on insurance.

Under the new system, the BIR only collects DST when an insurance company collects premium payment from a client. Before, insurance companies were required to pay DST based on the entire amount of the insurance policy sold.

Gov't resorts to BOT for IT projects

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri noted a marked growth in information technology-related projects in the government, which were being done under the build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme and its variants.

Neri said the success of these BOT projects "has not only helped the government in funding the projects but also paved the way for the transformation of several frontline offices into model public service agencies."

The growth in government IT projects also dispelled earlier perception that the private sector was not keen on such projects, Neri said.

The Information Technology Association of the Philippines (ITAP) had said earlier that regulations governing IT projects in the government "are not encouraging as much spending on IT as the private sector wants to see."

Neri said there were five major ongoing IT-related BOT projects. These are the land titling computerization project of the Land Registration Authority (LRA), the Machine Readable Passport and Visas project of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Civil Registry System project of the National Statistics Office (NSO), the database infrastructure and information technology system project of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), and the Alien Certificate of Registration Identification Card (ACR I-Card) project of the Bureau of Immigration (BI).

The BOT proponents are the Stradcom-Unysis-FF Cruz group LRA; BCA Corp. (Phil.) for DFA; Unysis (Phil.) for NSO; and Stradec-Confac-NCR (Phil.) for LTO.

HSBC sells 9.5% stake in Anscor

By Elizabeth L.Sanchez

HONG KONG Shanghai Banking Corp. (HSBC), the world's second largest bank, sold its 9.5-percent stake, equivalent to 237.24 million shares, in Philippine holding firm A.Soriano Corp (Anscor) for roughly P450.8 million.

HSBC obtained the 9.5-percent stake in Anscor from its wholly-owned unit, Michigan Investments Ltd. when it was dissolved in 1997.

Anscor holds a 59-percent stake in wire and cable manufacturer Phelps Dodge Phils. Energy Products Corp.; 46-percent stake in Seven Seas Resorts; 26 percent of port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc., and 6 percent of fast growing call center eTelecare.

At the stock market yesterday, shares of Anscor closed at P2.26 a share, up 28 centavos from previous close.

Market sources said HSBC sold its Anscor stake "to focus on its core business in the Philippines."

The shares were sold at an average of P1.90, raising a total of P450.76 million.

About 80 percent of these shares were bought by local and foreign institutional investors and the rest by retail investors, HSBC said.

ATR Kim Eng Securities brokered bulk of the deal.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), HSBC said that in 1997, it became the owner of a 9.5-percent stake in Anscor after Michigan Investments Ltd. and its holdings were transferred to the bank.

Analysts meanwhile view the deal as increasing Anscor's public float and offering investors an opportunity to invest in a company with diverse interests.

Anscor was incorporated in February 1930 by the late Colonel Andres Soriano as a holding company for diversified investments in the Philippines.

As of September last year, the company's net assets stood at P5.47 billion and net income at P437.87 million.

Bear, . . .

From page B1

move that could still generate at least P30 billion in additional revenue per year.

The Arroyo administration expects over P60 billion in additional revenue from the VAT hike and the expansion of its coverage, if those measures would be passed in their original forms.

The national government expects its budget deficit this year to hit P180 billion, or lower than last year's P180.6 billion. The deficit target for this year has yet to take into account the additional tax collection from the two VAT proposals.

With a lower budget deficit projection, the national government's debt as a percentage of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is seen to improve this year. From the debt-to-GDP ratio of 98.6 percent, the bank expects the figure to decline to 93.9 percent this year.

Bear, Stearns also said that remittances from overseas Filipino workers this year would remain healthy, and that there would be pouring in of investments in the local stock market.

"Despite recent rating agency downgrades, the Philippine economy is likely to remain awash in foreign liquidity in 2005," the bank said.

Bear, Stearns was referring to the credit rating downgrades on the Philippines by Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's.

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P7,082.50 per month for 12 months, at 0% interest. SRP: P84,990

Satellite A50-S332G
Model No. PSA50L-07M002
Extended battery life for a complete mobile computing experience.
- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology Intel® Pentium® M Processor 725 (1.60GHz, 2MB Cache, 400MHz FSB), Intel® PRO/Wireless Network Connection 802.11g
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Microsoft® Office OneNote™ 2003
- Toshiba ConfigFree™ Connectivity Doctor
- 14.1" (35.8cm) XGA TFT display
- Metallic silver chassis at 2.8kg
- 256MB DDR SDRAM/40GB HDD with shock absorber
- CD-RW/DVD-ROM combo drive
- 3 x USB 2.0, i.LINK (IEEE1394) and S-Video TV-out
- Up to 7.6 hours with optional 12-cell hi-cap battery (up to 4.0 hours battery life with standard battery)
- SRS TruSurround XT™ sound technology with internal stereo speakers
- 1-Year carry-in International Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

P7,749.17 per month for 12 months, at 0% interest. SRP: P92,990

Satellite A50-S432G
Model No: PSA50L-06M006
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- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- Microsoft® Office OneNote™ 2003
- Toshiba ConfigFree™ Connectivity Doctor
- 15.0" (38.1cm) XGA TFT display
- Metallic silver chassis at 2.8kg
- 256MB DDR SDRAM/40GB HDD with shock absorber
- CD-RW/DVD-ROM combo drive
- 2 x USB 2.0, i.LINK (IEEE1394)
- Up to 7.6 hours with optional 12-cell hi-cap battery (up to 4.0 hours battery life with standard battery)
- SRS TruSurround XT™ sound technology with internal stereo speakers
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- Super Multi Drive with CD/DVD burner
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- 1-year carry-in International Limited Warranty

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- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- Toshiba ConfigFree™ Connectivity Doctor
- 12.1" (30.7cm) Poly-Silicon XGA TFT display for a wider viewing angle and higher reliability
- 256MB DDR SDRAM/40GB HDD with shock absorber
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- Magnesium alloy chassis for stronger durability
- 3-Year carry-in International Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

P9,582.50 per month for 12 months, at 0% interest. SRP: P114,990

Qosmio E10
Model No. PQE10L-00G007
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P6,874.59 per month for 24 months, at 0% interest. SRP: P164,990

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ACCRA gets law review

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

ACCRA has received an embarrassing tax law lecture, from no less than the Supreme Court.

The high tribunal's First Division last week upheld a BIR ruling that electoral contributions made by ACCRA partners way back in 1987 are subject to donor's tax.

The blue-chip law firm, claiming political donations are tax-exempt and that the BIR had never taxed electoral contributions since the first Tax Code was enacted in 1909, fought the BIR all the way to the Supreme Court.

The case stemmed from the 1987 donations made by ACCRA partners Manuel Abello, Jose Concepcion, Teodoro Regala and Avelino V. Cruz to the senatorial candidacy of ACCRA partner Edgardo Angara.

The BIR wanted to levy P263,032.66 on each of the four, on the basis of their disclosure that each of them contributed an identical amount of P882,661.31 to the Angara campaign.

But before the BIR could collect the donors' taxes, ACCRA sued, initially winning the case before the Court of Tax Appeals before losing, when the government appealed, to the Court of Appeals.

"The fact that petitioners will somehow in the future benefit from the election of the candidate to whom they contribute in no way amounts to a valuable material consideration so as to remove political contributions from the purview of a donation," said Justice Adolfo Azcuna.

Azcuna also noted that political contributions reported to the Commission on Elections became tax-exempt only after the enactment of Republic Act No. 7166 in 1991.

Lippo suction

THE ACCOUNTING firm Punongbayan and Araullo is scheduled to conduct due diligence on Export and Industry Bank on behalf of the Lippo Group of Indonesia and Banco de Oro.

According to the grapevine, Lippo is pulling out of the Philippines and is also putting its modernist twin office towers in Hong Kong on the block to concentrate on the China market.

The decision to sell the Export Bank came about after the Riadys of Indonesia, who control the Lippo Group, failed to reacquire the Lippo Bank from the Indon government, using the Philippine bank as bid vehicle.

The smart money is now on Banco de Oro picking up the estimated 40 percent stake of the Lippo Group in Export Bank, especially with BDO's takeover bid of Equitable PCI Bank now in judicial limbo.

Money-go-round

- CEBU copra trader Douglas Lu Ym has won a crucial Supreme Court ruling in his fight to prevent the common-law wife of the late patriarch Cayetano Ludo, Gertrudes Nabua, and her siblings George, Cayetano, Julieta and Bernadita, from claiming additional inheritance outside of the 1984-court approved partition of the Ludo estate.

- THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System continues to quietly build up its stake in the publicly listed Equitable PCI Bank. Its shares are now equivalent to 12.15 percent from about 11.47 percent in end-2003.

- ROCKWELL is set to break ground in the fourth quarter for another condominium project, this time targeting the mid-market and young professionals.

Heard through the grapevine

THE PROPOSED appointment of outgoing Energy Secretary Vince Perez as chair of the Philippine National Oil Corp. even as the *consuelo de bobo* is encountering heavy turbulence.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week March 01, 2005	Last Week February 22, 2005
Bond Fund - Peso	1.21145	1.20918
Managed Fund - Peso	1.34316	1.32887
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0981	1.0997

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

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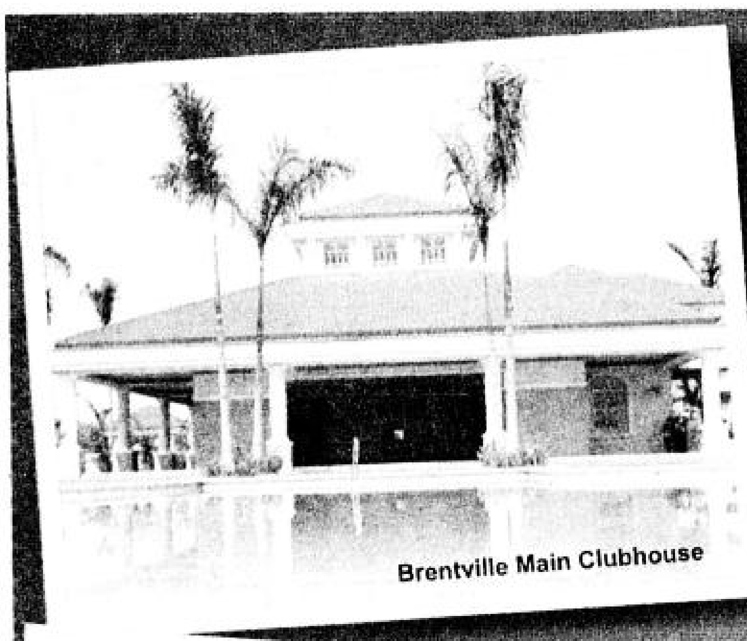
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Metrobank eyes rights offering

Bank takes advantage of strong interest in RP debt paper

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, plans to raise about P12 to P13 billion when it begins offering up to 350 million in new shares to existing equity holders.

Taking advantage of strong foreign investor interest in Philippine debt and equity paper, the bank yesterday told the Philippine Stock Exchange that its board of directors had approved the issuance of new shares out of its authorized but unissued capital stock.

It said the offer price would be computed based on a 0 to 10 percent discount to either the closing price on the trading day preceding the pricing date or the weighted average price of the shares in the last 10 trading days preceding the pricing date.

The pricing date has yet to be fixed.

Metrobank will set the record date once it has obtained listing and satisfied other regulatory requirements.

An analyst said that based on the P37 closing price of Metrobank shares at the PSE yesterday and the projected discount range, the stock rights offering could raise anywhere between P12 to P13 billion.

"This will lead to the further appreciation of the peso because it will result in dollar inflows," said Joseph Roxas, Eagle Equities Inc. president. "Metrobank has a lot of foreign stockholders."

METROBANK'S George Ty

Roxas said raising capital was always good for any bank, as additional funds would mean expansion of business volume.

Metrobank has an authorized capital of 2.5 billion shares, of which 1.63 billion are issued and outstanding.

With the additional issuance, the bank said the number of unissued shares would go down to 516.34 million.

Other analysts said the additional tier 1 capital for Metrobank would improve its underlying capital adequacy in the aftermath of bad asset sales done in the past.

Metrobank is controlled by taipan George Ty, who also has interests in real estate, car manufacturing and retailing, investment banking, power generation and insurance.

BPI launches new dollar bond fund

THE AYALA-OWNED Bank of the Philippine Islands yesterday offered to the public a US dollar mutual fund invested mainly in Philippine sovereign bonds.

The ALFM Dollar Bond Fund, packaged out of a dollar mutual fund absorbed by BPI when it acquired Far East Bank and Trust Co. years ago, would be sold to retail investors through the bank's subsidiaries BPI Capital Corp., BPI Securities Corp. and BPI Investment Management Inc.

During the launching, Fernando Jose Sison, president of BPI Investment Management, said the ALFM Dollar Bond Fund had been placed mainly in Republic of the Philippines (ROP) bonds, of which 57 percent had long-term maturities.

Another 20 percent of the portfolio was devoted to medium-term ROPs, 14 percent to short-term ROPs, and the remaining 9 percent to short-term money market instruments.

Asked why investors would want to shift to US dollar instruments when the currency was depreciating against the peso, Sison said the newly launched fund was meant for investors with natural hedging capability.

"We have a sizeable community of investors who have dollars to begin with," Sison explained. "We are targeting those with ready supply and not those who will still have to convert from pesos to dollars."

Explaining why the fund was heavily tilted toward ROPs, Sison said: "It's because, with the ROPs, everything is within the control of the fund manager ... the information is available as we live in this country."

He also said that Philippine bond prices "offer better yields compared to similarly rated sovereign issues."

ALFM Dollar Bond Fund chair Romeo Bernardo said the fund was heavily invested in Philippine IOUs because of ample supply.

Next to Japan, the Philippines is the biggest sovereign issuer of foreign bonds in Asia.

Global rating agency Standard & Poor's expects the Philippine government to raise another $7 billion (P401 billion) from commercial medium-to-long-term borrowings this year, partly to support cash-strapped state corporations.

Since its inception, the ALFM Dollar Fund has recorded a 4.82-percent return in investment per annum, better than the 1.65-percent return on one-year US Treasuries, Sison said.

For 2004 alone, he noted that the mutual fund finished with a 2.51-percent ROI per annum, better than the 1.19 percent rate of one-year US Treasuries. From year to date, the yield is estimated at 3.85 percent, better than the 2.78 percent of US Treasuries.

With the public offering, BPI hopes to grab a bigger share of the dollar mutual fund market in the country.

At its present fund size of $46.82 million, it accounts for 15 percent of the market as against market leader Philippine American Insurance Group whose dollar bond fund corners 82 percent.

The bank believes investments in the ALFM Dollar may prove to be a prudent strategy with the forecast exchange rate average of between P55-P56 to the dollar this year.

For a minimum initial investment of $5,000, an investor can avail of professional fund management service from BPI, while subsequent investments may be done for a minimum of $500. *Doris C. Dumlao*

$10M marked for RP cotton trade

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PRIVATE sector is expected to pour in $10 million, or about P550 million, in new investments to revive the local cotton trade, in line with the Department of Agriculture's six-year development program for the industry.

"The investments would mostly cover the rehabilitation of existing ginneries, their refurbishments and modernization," said Isidor Gilan, president and general manager of Primatex Fibre Corp.

Gilan told reporters during the anniversary of the Cotton Development Administration (Coda) that the private sector would take the lead in implementing Coda's six-year Philippine Cotton Industry Road Map.

The program's objectives include developing a privately managed cotton sector and to set aside at least 50,000 hectares for cotton production by 2010.

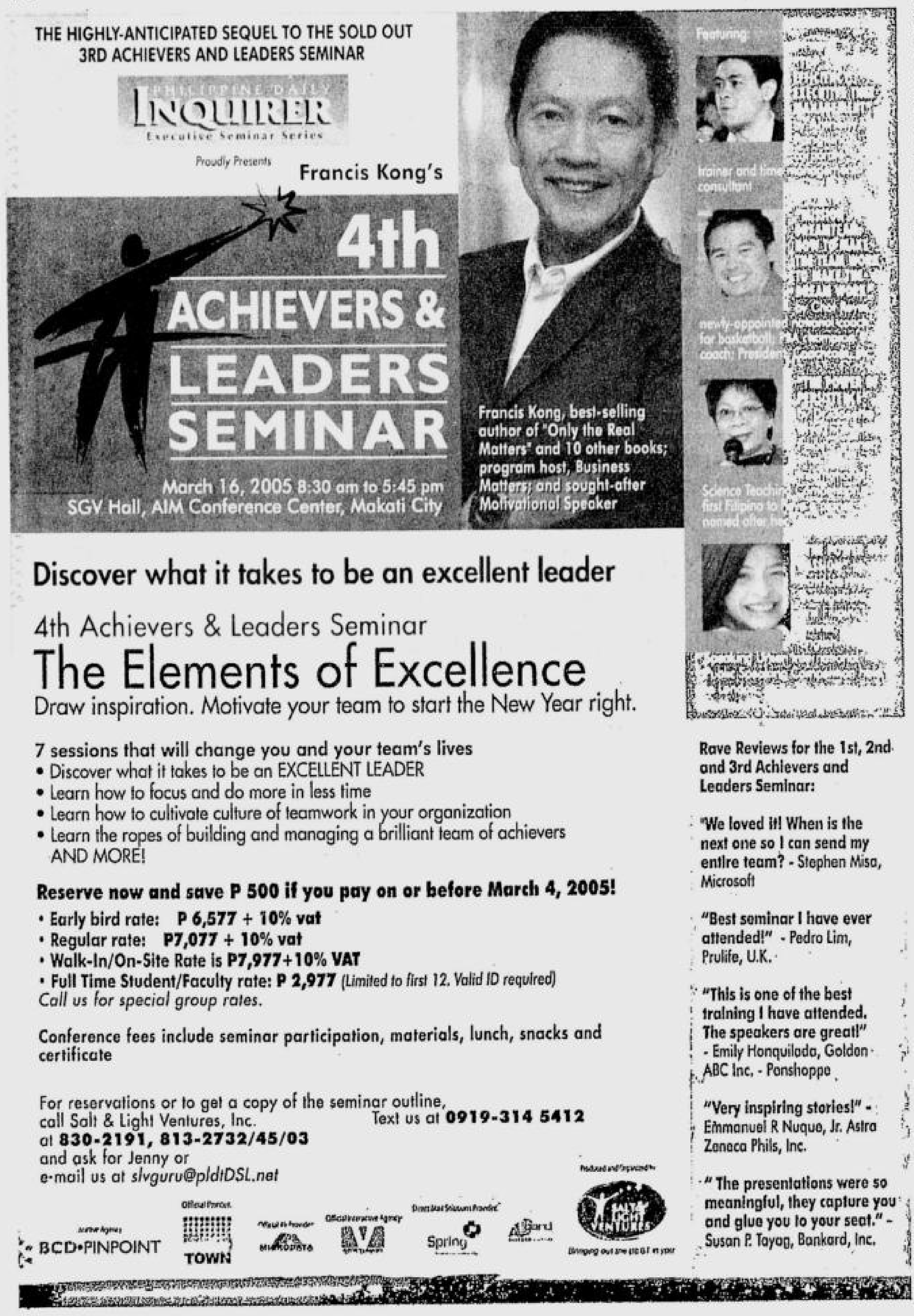
Coda is spearheading the revival of the cotton industry that went on a decline after the 1991-1992 harvest season. At that time, cotton fields were reduced in size to about 2,000 hectares. This led to the closure of a number of cotton ginneries. There were about 17 ginneries left idle.

Currently, only 4,921 hectares of farmlands are planted to cotton. Coda is hoping to revive the cotton industry in 25 provinces.

The Philippines imports 95 percent of its cotton requirement from the United States, Australia and Pakistan.

Coda Administrator Eugenio Orpia noted that the cotton industry had started to bounce back.

"Farm-level yield almost doubled from 678 kilograms per hectare to 1,220, while six new varieties were approved for commercialization since 1998," Orpia said. "At the same time, we are putting in place measures to entice the private sector to go into cotton planting and production."



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STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	5,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	29	30	29	30	719,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	60	58.5	59.5	1,827,600
China Banking Corp.	680	680	680	680	1,320
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47.5	50.5	47.5	50.5	812,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.93	1.02	0.9	1	98,270,000
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	45,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37	37.5	36.5	37	1,707,700
Philippine National Bank	31.5	33	31.5	32	54,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	16,700
Security Bank Corp.	30.5	31	30.5	31	35,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	30.5	29	30	69,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	10,000
First Abacus Financial	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	30,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	16,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2400	2400	2400	2400	230
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	154,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	135	138	135	138	1,700
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1730	1730	1730	1730	420
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	5,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.5	1.52	3,671,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	930	935	925	935	91,980
Ipeople Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.75	4.75	96,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0625	0.0625	10,900,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	60,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.7	12,574,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1400	1430	1400	1410	151,520
Ivantage Corp.	0.74	0.76	0.74	0.76	1,720,000
Philweb Corp.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	235,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.5	127,000
Manila Electric Co. B	30	31	30	31	1,383,900
Petron Corp.	4.1	4.1	4	4.05	7,482,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	339,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.96	1.98	1.94	1.94	61,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	10,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.1	8.4	8	8.3	1,546,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	20,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.81	0.83	0.7	0.7	17,130,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.35	4.1	4.2	1,955,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	150,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	104,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	37	37	36.5	37	3,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29.5	31	29.5	30	5,817,900
Pancake House Inc	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	110,000
RFM Corp.	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	5,690,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.39	0.42	0.39	0.42	720,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	40,000
San Miguel Corp. B	78.5	79	78.5	79	61,000
Universal Robina Corp.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	175,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	150,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	10	10.25	10	10.25	1,400
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	288,500,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.3	10,070,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.6	0.65	0.6	0.64	2,150,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.7	4.7	4.65	4.7	258,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	2,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.048	0.049	0.046	0.048	12,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.94	2.26	1.9	2.26	244,552,000
APC Group Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.45	3,320,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	24,000,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.9	120,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	22	22	21.5	21.5	12,300
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.23	0.18	0.23	47,960,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.24	1.28	26,494,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1	1	1	1	20,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	900,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	51,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,230,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.55	830,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.15	4.15	3.95	4	3,261,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.055	0.0575	0.055	0.055	2,200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	15,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	273,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	56.5	57	56	57	513,300
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	110,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.11	5,030,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.78	1.8	1.74	1.78	931,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.3	3.45	3.3	3.45	684,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2.04	2	2.02	339,000
Medco Holdings	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	150,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.6	1.68	1.6	1.68	3,319,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	30,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.47	0.56	0.47	0.52	4,810,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.57	0.59	0.57	0.58	21,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.34	760,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	22,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	210,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	150,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.63	0.65	1,490,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.195	0.2	25,170,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.21	1,000,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	710,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	20,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8	8	7.9	7.9	13,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	410,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.95	0.95	240,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.12	0.12	2,480,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.5	1.54	1.48	1.52	11,137,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	10	10	10	10	4,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.16	1,205,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.58	1.6	6,194,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	360,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	17.5	17.75	17.25	17.5	808,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.5	6.7	6.5	6.7	12,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9	9	8.8	9	13,549,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	52,500,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	10,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.33	3,440,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	5,950,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.25	0.37	0.25	0.32	1,480,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	13,760,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.78	1.7	1.76	5,116,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	80,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	120,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	2,250,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.76	0.76	210,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	300,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.155	0.18	480,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.95	3	2.95	3	143,000
SM Development Corp.	1.86	1.88	1.82	1.86	437,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.8	11,188,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.04	245,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.06	337,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	25,900,000
Atlas Cons Min & Dev't	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.4	690,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	24,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.4	1,370,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.44	20,360,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	30,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	48,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.009	0.01	0.009	0.0095	1,311,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.2	1.2	1.14	1.14	1,066,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.4	5,407,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	43.5	43.5	42.5	43	514,200
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	9,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	78,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	200,000
Pacifica	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	10,200,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	25,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.225	26,490,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	50,000

DISCLOSURES

A. BROWN Co. Inc. bought 1,000 of its own shares at P1 each.

* * *

RECORD date for **Steniel Manufacturing Corp.**'s April 26 annual stockholders' meeting is March 23.

* * *

CHINA Banking Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 5, 4 p.m. at the Penthouse of Chinabank Building, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 8 will be entitled to vote during the meeting.

* * *

PHILWEB Corp. approved additional option grants of 1.39 billion shares to its officers and employees. The share will be offered at a 20 percent discount over the average closing price of the company's stock over the past 30 trading days.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank declared a P0.20 per share cash dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of March 16 and will be payable starting April 1.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Farmers, physicians for peace

By Ernesto M Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

I ADMIRED the way my father helped the poor. Being a medical doctor, he would cure them for free.

I too wanted to help the poor, but had no inclination to be a doctor.

"Don't worry, you can also help the poor by giving them jobs," my father said. "This way, they can buy medicine and take preventive action against illness."

So I took graduate degrees from Yale University and New York University, and ultimately got a PhD in Business Administration.

But my father jokingly warned me: "Do not call yourself a doctor. I have an MD, which means doctor of medicine; you have a PhD, which means phony doctor."

Farmers and health

Since then, I have joined others in trying to increase the income of farmers and give them jobs. But I have since realized that even more basic is the farmer's good health.

When a farmer is sick or physically handicapped, he or she cannot work well. Often, this person needs the attention of still another. This means two lost jobs.

While looking for new livelihood opportunities, we should also take care of the farmers' health.

Today, most farmers have no health insurance. When their health suffers, they go to the extent of selling almost everything they own, including their land.

When the farmers have little money, they have to rely on Rural Health Unit (RHU) centers, which often have limited medicine and technical staff. In addition, the social network, which the farmers need to avail of the scarce RHU services, is sorely lacking.

The alternative is to adopt the approach of building transformative communities, where the community itself will formulate their own health agenda and work on the social network to implement it.

Such an activity is going on in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Two days ago, approximately 400 blind people from San Miguel's 45 barangay communities came to register for assistance. This could not have happened without the social network that was recently formed.

The registration is part of the event that marks the launching of San Miguel's five-year community based health program. The launch is scheduled for March 7.

A model to follow

How this all came to be is even more interesting than the program itself, and suggests a model for others to follow.

The Samahang Kababaihan ng San Miguel, Bulacan (KBB), composed mostly of women farmers, formulated their own health agenda with tuberculosis (TB) and blindness as their priority concerns.

The Philippines has the highest incidence of TB cases in the Western Pacific. The country is in the top 20, out of 170 countries surveyed. The Philippines also has the highest incidence of blindness in the Western Pacific. The country ranks No. 3 in the world.

Although San Miguel has the facilities to tend to cases of TB and blindness, both Mayor Edmundo Buencamino and the municipal health officer, Dr. Edwin Tecson, believe that they are not being efficiently used because of inadequate social network.

Thus, when the KBB mobilized the other non-government organizations (NGOs) and, together, they came out with a five-year health program that emphasized community involvement, Mayor Buencamino decided to implement the program right away.

The massive turnout of 400 blind people two days ago could never have happened without this partnership.

Physicians for peace

The partnership that evolved in San Miguel greatly benefited from the support and innovative ideas of the Physicians for Peace Philippines (PFP), a national NGO founded by Dr. Roy Montero and led by its president, Dr. Teodoro Herbosa.

The PFP believes that it has a new paradigm in the San Miguel partnership.

PFP Philippines is part of a global PFP network operating in 40 countries. In the Philippines, the PFP has decided to try a different approach.

Instead of just offering free medical services, the PFP worked with the KBB, the San Miguel municipal government and another NGO called Sukob in formulating a five-year community based health program.

What is different about it is that, when the PFP offers free medical services, a massive mobilization takes place involving the whole community. The quality of this mobilization is significant because it is done in the context of a five-year program.

On March 1, Hadja Bainon Karon, the Social Welfare secretary of the ARMM, brought along Bangsamoro NGO women leaders to witness the San Miguel mobilization and study the five-year health program. The women leaders will then implement this approach in Sulu, Tawi Tawi, Cotobato City and Maguindanao.

This paradigm will be useful to other NGOs wishing to offer their services to a community that is often unorganized and unprepared.

It will also be useful for the communities to organize in this manner because they will be more successful in seeking aid from outside sources.

A celebration

Next week, on the occasion of International Women's Day and the birth anniversary of the KBB leader, the late Ka Emma Sta. Ana, a celebration will be held in San Miguel.

The celebration, to be led by Mayor Buencamino, will coincide with the launching of the five-year community based health program.

Among those gathering for the celebration are Brig. Gen. Ron Sconyers, chief operating officer of PFP Worldwide; Dr. Juan Montero, PFP Philippines founder; Barney Mcglade of Christoffel Blindenmission (Christian Blind Mission) which funds Sukob, a key NGO partner; and Dr. Theresa Sicat, Sukob chair.

As my father said, it is not only doctors of medicine who can give hope to farmers in the critical area of health. Grassroots leaders of well conceived community health programs will not only add to this hope but also turn this hope into widespread reality.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 8516635.)

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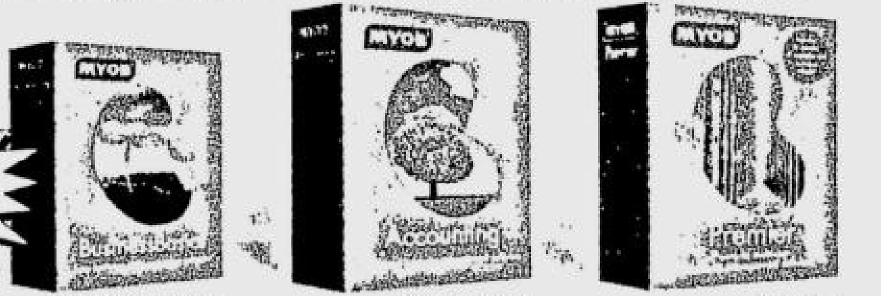

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ASIATRUST Bank

Slash-off PROPERTY AUCTION
Kayang-Kaya Presyo

9 am to 12 noon, March 12, 2005,
11th Floor, Asiatrust Bank Bldg.,
1424 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City

CITYLAND, DELA ROSA MAKATI COMM'L CONDO.
F.A. 27.29 sqm., Citiland, De la Rosa
Min. Bid Price P 900,000

ABBA HOMES SUBD., ANTIPOLO VACANT LOT
L.A. 237 sqm., ABBA Homes Subd.
Min. Bid Price P 400,000

VILLAGE EAST, BINANGONAN RSDL LOT
L.A. 204 sqm., Village East Binangonan Rizal
Min. Bid Price P 510,000

MONTERAZZAS VILL., BAGUIO CITY RSDL. LOT
L.A. 418 sqm., Monterazzas Village, Bugon
Min. Bid Price P 708,000

BRGY. BOLBOK, BATANGAS RSDL. LOT
L.A. 598 sqm.., Brgy. Bolbok, Batangas City
Min. Bid Price P 598,000

DARASA, BATANGAS HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 237 sqm. F.A. 118.05 sqm.
#279 Darasa Highway
Min. Bid Price P 800,000

BAUAN BATANGAS RSDL. LOT
L.A. 230 sqm.
Calumala Subdivision, Bauan
Min. Bid Price P 150,000

DE JOYA ST. BARRIO CUTA, BATANGAS RSDL LOT
L.A. 203 sqm.
De Joya St., Barrio Cuta
Min. Bid Price P 812,000

METROPOLIS GREEN, GEN.TRIAS, CAVITE RSDL LOT
L.A. 150 sqm.
Metropolis Green, Gen. Trias
Min. Bid Price P 330,000

MARY CRIS HOMES, CAVITE ROWHOUSE
L.A. 40 sqm. F.A.26.6 sqm. P 228,000
L.A. 40 sqm. F.A.60 sqm. P 204,000
L.A. 36 sqm. F.A.26.6 sqm P 205,000

SAN RAFAEL EXEC. VILLA., BACOOR, CAVITE
2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 60 sqm. F.A. 110 sqm.
Min. Bid Price P 900,000

2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 60 sqm. F.A. 53.58 sqm.
Min. Bid Price P 800,000

GOLD RICH VILLAS, BACOOR, CAVITE
Townhouse Unit
L.A. 44 sqm. F.A. 70 sqm.
Gold Rich Villas, Bacoor
Min. Bid Price P 750,000

SAN ISIDRO, ISABELA AGRI LOT
L.A. 4,106 sqm. P 275,000
L.A. 850 sqm. P 204,000
L.A. 11,250 sqm. P 765,000

ROSARIO, ISABELA RSDL LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
Min. Bid Price P 192,000

PLARIDEL, ISABELA RSDL LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
Min. Bid Price P 240,000

MONCADA TARLAC RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,555 sqm.
#19 Mc Arthur H-way, Moncada
Min. Bid Price P 500,000

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headed by Jos Capicion, SFA
Overall Recruitment Award,
Agency Builder Circle

PHOENIX STAR SUB-BRANCH
Manulife Agency of the Year
headed by Maber Zapanta
FSG Recruitment Award

EMERALD EAST BRANCH
FSG Top Branch
headed by Marna Oronlan

FILIPINIANA REGION
SRG Top Region
headed by Susan Cosmiano

ELISA PEÑAMANTE UNIT
SRG Top Rookie Unit
headed by Elisa Peñamante

EASTERN STAR SUB-BRANCH
FSG Top Agency
headed by Cecile Ardeta

BINONDO EAST BRANCH
Manulife Branch of the Year
headed by Nellie Lim

JOHN CHIA
Senior Regional Sales Head
Agency Leaders Management Award

FORTUNE MORENO AGENCY
SRG Top Agency
headed by Fortune Moreno

CALANDA PILLARS
Manulife Rookie Unit of the Year
headed by Susie Tan-Domingo

ALABANG HARVEST UNIT
FSG Top Rookie Unit
headed by Adel Sison

EAST BLESSINGS UNIT
FSG Top Unit
headed by Fely Sabajen

METRO CEBU REGION
FSG Top Region
headed by [illegible] Rodriguez
5-Star Master Builder

ROOKIE AWARDS

NELSON DELA VIRGO
FSG Rookie Award,
3rd Place

LILIAN CO
SRG Rookie Awa
1st Place

TOP ASSOCIATES

ARLENE JIMENEZ, SFA
FSG Top Associate, 1st Place

CARA DELOS SANTOS, SFA
FSG Top Associate, 2nd Place
MDRT Qualifying Member

GINA BEATRIZ LIM, SFA
FSG Top Associate, 3rd Place
MDRT Candidate

NORMA DELA CRUZ
SRG Top Associate, 1st Place

CYNTHIA CAÑIZARES-FUENTEBELLA
SRG Top Associate, 2nd Place

BELEN PINEDA-LEONCIO
SRG Top Associate, 3rd Place

SPECIAL AWARDS & RECOGNITIO

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MDRT Qualifying Member
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Hall of Fame
MDRT Qualifying and Life Member
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CHONA SAMANIE
MDRT Qualifying Mem

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CHERRIE CRUZ, SFA
Associate of the Year, 2nd Runner Up
MDRT Qualifying Member

ROMMEL DELA ROSA, SFA
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MDRT Qualifying Member

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MDRT Qualifying Member

AILEEN TAN
Rookie of the Year, 2nd Runner Up

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

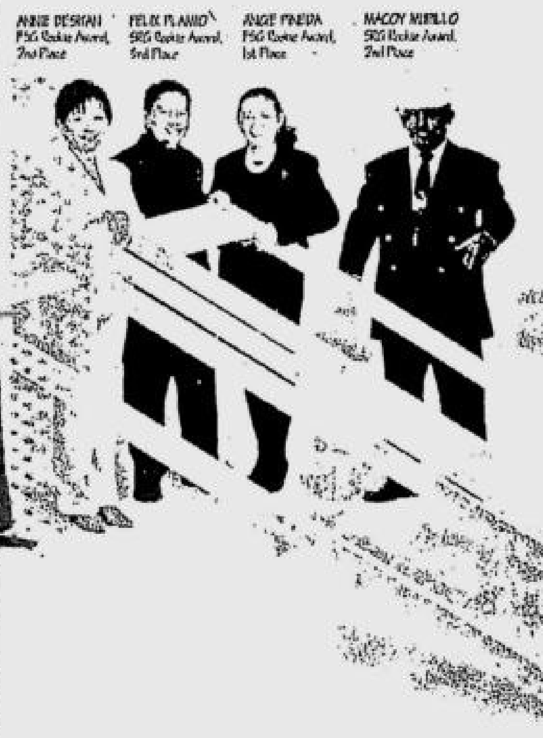
This evening, we recognize a group of sales achievers and elite teams that have established themselves as the cream of Manulife's Agency Force for 2004. Their collective dedication to their craft as Career Agents and Agency Leaders distinguishes them from the rest. Despite the changes this organization has undergone and the many external obstacles thrown their way in the last twelve months, they have maintained their vigor and remain focused on their day-to-day tasks to propel them to lead their peers. Commitment to one's career is at the heart of Manulife's mission - that of being the most professional life insurance company in the world.

Congratulations to all our agency awardees! Let us remain true to our vocation and rally to conclude 2005 with our best performance ever.

Start Strong, Finish Well - Manulife!

Renato A. Vergel de Dios
President and CEO, Manulife

AGENCY LEADER AWARDS



ANNIE BESITAN
PSG Rookie Award, 2nd Place

FELIX PLANIO
SRG Rookie Award, 3rd Place

ANGIE PINEDA
PSG Rookie Award, 1st Place

MACOY MURILLO
SRG Rookie Award, 2nd Place

THELMA SERRANO
SRG Recruitment Award

MARGIE ONGKEKO
Agency Leaders Management Award

GINA RESULTAN
Agency Leaders Management Award

ROSE ERFE
Agency Leaders Management Award

MARY CORTEZ
Agency Leaders Management Award

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Star Master Builder

MARIVI BACUYAG, SFA
MDRT Qualifying Member

RUBY CHUAUNSU, SFA
MDRT Qualifying Member
Star Master Builder
South Center, Manulife Unit of the Year
PSG Recruitment Award
Agency Leaders Management Award

VIRGIE TIMBANCAYA-PAMARAN, SFA
MDRT Qualifying Member
Agency Leaders Management Award

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Ruby Chuaunsu, SFA

Virgie Timbancaya-Pamaran, SFA

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Jhun Gesmundo
Dra. Tonette Montejo
Del Alzaga
Malu Francisco
Josie Sedilla
Flor Sancho
Len Zandueta
Joboy De Jesus
Aileen Torres
Dotty Abrina
Fely Simbajon
Tita Sendin
Marge Ongkeko
Debbie Vedan
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Debate over steel tariffs rages on

WASHINGTON—US lawmakers, steel companies and unions urged a trade panel Wednesday to keep steel tariffs on some foreign imports for five more years.

Carmakers and appliance manufacturers said it's time to let competition back into the market.

The US International Trade Commission is reviewing penalties put in place in 1999 to stop a flood of low-priced hot-rolled steel from Brazil, Japan and Russia.

A second wave of steel imports from 11 other countries led to additional tariffs in 2002, which President George W. Bush lifted in late 2003.

"Unfortunately, unfairly traded imports of hot-rolled steel have continued to plague this industry and continued to harm steel workers and their families," Rep. Ted Strickland, D-Ohio, told the panel.

About two dozen other lawmakers from steel producing states, including Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Illinois, also testified in favor of keeping the tariffs.

But domestic manufacturers such as Ford Motor Co., General Motors Corp., Maytag Corp., Whirlpool Corp. and auto parts maker Dana Corp. of Toledo, told the trade panel that the tariffs are causing higher steel prices and harming their business.

"We believe that the restitution in this case are no longer needed," said Jeff Engel, executive director for American production purchasing at Ford. The US steel industry has rebounded and reorganized since the tariffs were first ordered. International Steel Group was born after merging several bankrupt steel companies, including LTV and Weirton, while US Steel and Nucor each acquired other companies. *AP*

PROBLEMS REMAIN

US economy sound, US Fed says

NEW YORK—The US economy is on a good footing and inflation is stable, but the country's large budget deficit and low savings rate are significant problems that must be addressed, Federal Reserve officials said on Wednesday.

Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan warned about the dangers the budget shortfall posed to the economy in his testimony to the House of Representatives Budget Committee.

"You cannot continuously introduce legislation which tends to expand budget deficits because down the road the impact of an ever-rising deficit, especially as a percent of GDP, creates some significant weakness in the structure of the economy," he said.

Last month, President George W. Bush projected the budget deficit at a record $427 billion for the 2005 fiscal year.

Greenspan said cutting the deficit required scrutiny of taxes and spending.

But he said tax increases of the size necessary to deal with the fiscal gap could pose significant risks to growth.

The Fed chair has long favored spending cuts over tax increases.

Federal Reserve Board Governor Edward Gramlich said costly entitlement programs, namely Social Security and Medicare, must be restructured to avoid a fiscal crunch.

The two programs could swallow half of federal spending in a little more than a decade if something was not done, he said in a speech at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania .

"Changes have to be made in these large entitlement programs to avoid a real fiscal disaster," he said, pointing to the looming retirement of the large baby-boom generation.

Unlike Greenspan, who has come out in favor of a plan by Bush to replace some Social Security benefits with private investment accounts, Gramlich preferred personal accounts as an add-on.

"If, for example, the individual accounts were to be 'carved out' of present payroll tax payments, as President Bush has recently proposed, household saving would go up but government saving, in the first instance, would go down by the same amount," he said.

In contrast, add-on accounts would raise national savings.

San Francisco Fed president Janet Yellen called fiscal policy one of the worries for the economy.

"Currently projected budget deficits are unsustainable and will ensure a low level of national savings," she said in a speech in San Francisco.

Such a situation was "likely to raise long-term interest rates, crowd-out business capital investment, depress productivity growth and exacerbate the current account deficit," she said.

Despite their concerns about the budget deficit and savings, the Fed officials were upbeat on the near-term economic outlook.

"The economy appears to be well positioned for healthy economic growth with stable inflation going forward," Yellen said, adding "The upside and downside risks to both objectives appear to be roughly balanced."

She noted that with the federal funds rate at 2.5 percent, monetary policy remained accommodative.

Gramlich also said US output growth was healthy and inflation rates stable.

Greenspan did not say much about the immediate economic outlook in his testimony, concentrating instead on budget issues, but he did say the economy was doing well.

"The US economy delivered a solid performance in 2004, and thus far this year, activity appears to be expanding at a reasonably good pace," he said.

The economy grew 4.4 percent in 2004, the strongest for any year since 1999, when it expanded 4.5 percent. *Reuters*

A LOCAL investor looks at a wall of monitors showing the stock index in Taipei. Taipei Share prices closed 0.37 percent lower yesterday as bargain-hunting towards the close failed to turn around entirely early losses attributable in part to Wall Street's overnight weakness, dealers said. The weighted index closed down 22.87 points at 6,202.38, after trading between 6,164.15 and 6,219.71, on turnover of 78.44 billion Taiwan dollars ($2.55 billion). AFP

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Crude oil steadies near $53, hurting Asian stock prices

SINGAPORE—Oil prices steadied in Asia on Thursday after surging to four-month highs over $53 a barrel, pumping up oil-related shares but sparking inflation fears that pushed most stock markets lower.

The dollar was steady against the yen and just below a one-week high against the euro and three-week high against the Australian dollar.

Japan's Nikkei stock average was flat by midday.

Some energy and resource stocks such as Nippon Mining Holdings Inc. gained on hopes higher prices will boost their profits, but others including Mitsui & Co. fell on profit taking.

MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian share markets edged lower, with shares in Hong Kong a touch higher as oil giant CNOOC gained 1.7 percent.

Taiwan's index was down 0.75 percent on sharp falls in flat screen makers such as AU Optronics Australian shares rose half a percent to a record high as mining shares climbed.

US crude oil futures slipped 9 cents to $52.96 a barrel on technical selling after rising as high as $53.20, but traders said prices would be supported by concerns about gasoline supplies.

A series of refinery problems in Texas, which overshadowed a build in US gasoline stocks, was expected to push crude prices above the record high of $55.67 struck on Oct. 25.

"This market simply wants to go up," said Kyle Cooper, an analyst with Citigroup Global Markets.

The rise in oil prices reawakened concerns about increased corporate costs in the United States, pushing US shares down about a fifth of a percent.

The Philadelphia Stock Exchange semiconductor index sank 1.57 percent.

Earlier, the Dow touched a 3-1/2-year high after remarks by Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan reassured investors.

Greenspan said the economy was growing at a "reasonably good pace," which market strategists interpreted as meaning the Fed would continue with steady interest-rate hikes rather than aggressive rises.

But Greenspan's focus on the budget deficit in his congressional testimony kept the dollar from gaining much.

It bought about 104.83 yen up slightly from 104.75 yen in late US trade, and was worth about $1.3135 per euro, little changed from New York.

The Australian dollar traded at 78.22 cents not far from Wednesday's three-week low of 77.70 hit after data showing the Australian economy slowed sharply at the end of 2004.

Traders were focused on Friday's US employment report, with Wall Street economists expecting around 220,000 new jobs for February, compared with 146,000 the previous month, according to a Reuters poll.

Among Asian stocks, Taiwan's AU, local rival Chi Mei Optoelectronics and South Korean flat-screen maker LG Philips LCD fell about 4 percent.

Hynix Semiconductor slid 5.3 percent in Seoul after Merrill Lynch downgraded the stock to "neutral" because of weak memory chip prices, despite the company reporting a swing to profits in the fourth quarter.

Benchmark indexes were down 0.4 percent in Seoul and 0.1 percent in Singapore.

Spot gold was trading around at $432.70 an ounce, compared with $432.30 late in New York. *Reuters*

S.Korea credit card spending hit record high in Q4 of 2004

SEOUL—South Koreans spent a record amount on their credit cards and used them less for cash advances in the final quarter of 2004, data showed on Thursday, offering more evidence a long slump in consumption may be ending.

Spending on credit cards reached a record 34.1 trillion won ($34 billion) in the December quarter, up 10 percent from the previous quarter and 12 percent higher than a year earlier, the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS) said in a statement.

Providing a fairly upbeat assessment on the economy, the chief economist at global credit ratings agency Standard & Poor's said domestic demand appeared to be taking over from exports as the main driver of growth in Asia's third-largest economy.

But other economists were more cautious, saying a depressed domestic jobs market and resurgent world oil prices could prevent private consumption from picking up drastically for now.

"The data does not change my view that any recovery in consumption would be only moderate and gradual unless the job market improves, and rising oil prices are also a threat," said Ryu Seung-sun, an economist at Mirae Asset Securities.

Financial markets also appeared to shrug off the data, which had been disclosed by Finance Minister Lee Hun-jai last month.

The stock market's wholesale and retail sector index was down 1 percent at 270.95 points by midday, against the broad market's 0.4 percent drop.

The sector index has gained 13 percent so far this year.

Standard & Poor's chief economist David Wyss appeared to side more with the South Korean government's optimistic view of the economy in a news conference in Seoul.

Wyss said that Asian countries outside China, such as South Korea and the Philippines, were starting to see demand replacing exports as an engine of growth.

"We are beginning to see that has started," he said, referring to the trend.

South Korean policy makers are banking on a recovery in domestic demand to pick up the slack expected to emerge when exports cool.

Exports last year surged 31 percent, led by red-hot demand from China, helping South Korea's gross domestic product expand by 4.7 percent despite a 0.9 percent drop in private consumption, the country's central bank estimated in December.

But the Bank of Korea expects the picture to change in 2005 when exports show a slower pace of growth and the economy needs to rely more on consumption.

It forecast this year's GDP would be 4 percent higher than in 2004 as an expected recovery in private consumption, which accounts for more than half of the annual GDP, would not be fast enough to make up for slowing export growth.

Meanwhile, cash advance services reached 21.4 trillion won in the three month period, down 0.9 percent from the third quarter and down 34 percent a year earlier, the FSS said, apparently as consumers reduced fresh borrowing.

Total credit card usage rose to 55.6 trillion won in the fourth quarter, ending a run of falls since it hit a record 101.2 trillion in the third quarter of 2002. Usage was up 5.7 percent in the quarter, but was 11.6 percent lower than a year earlier.

South Korea's credit card industry is slowly recovering after billions of dollars of debts had to be written off after a consumer credit bubble burst in late 2002. *Reuters*

Seventh-day Adventists mark centenary

THE SEVENTH-DAY Adventist Church will mark its centennial year in the Philippines in simple but meaningful year-long observance nationwide. With the theme, "Celebrating God's Goodness," celebration kicked off February with evangelistic crusades and baptismal rites in local churches across the country.

There will also be a business and livelihood expo at the North Philippines Union Mission headquarters in Donada Street, Pasay City to provide an avenue for networking for entrepreneurs among the members of the Church.

On March 4, the Church will hold a torch relay motorcade from Sta. Ana to the Quirino Grandstand to emphasize its stand on anti-drug and anti-smoking, and preference for Christian values.

After the run, members of the SDA Church will also form the world's biggest human cross in a bid to secure a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records.

The event's highlight is a thanksgiving worship service on March 5 at the Araneta Coliseum with visiting international leader Dr. Jan Paulsen as guest preacher. The Maryland-based leader is also expected to meet key personalities in the government and media sectors to share the work and heritage of the Adventist Church in the Philippines and in other parts of the world.

The Adventist Church was introduced in the Philippines in 1905 by American missionaries, first of which was Robert Caldwell who distributed Adventist literature in Manila and gave home Bible studies. The pioneering efforts of the missionaries resulted to the organization of the first Adventist church in Sta. Ana, Manila in 1911.

In its 100 years of work in the Philippines, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has 1,308,000 members and has established 4,190 churches, seven hospitals, hundreds of schools, including a university, making it the Protestant Church in the Philippines with the largest educational system.

One of its leading medical institutions is the 75-year-old Manila Adventist Medical Center (formerly the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital) in Pasay City, which is in the forefront of preventive and alternative medicine.

For inquiries, call 528-9870.

PARTNERS IN CRIME

Philippine Daily Inquirer marketing vice president Donald Lim (right) and Euro RSCG Manila strategic planning director and executive partner Ed Mapa enjoy a cold beer during the launch of the newspaper's INQuest Adventure at Absinth Bar in Greenbelt 3, Makati City. INQuest Adventure-a game that will use print and broadcast media, mobile SMS and online websites as it progresses-is the Inquirer's most ambitious marketing promotions project. It's a whodunit mystery that starts with the murder of Jerson Morales, a loved-by-all 28-year-old partygoer, and immediately incriminates six people with different interests and personalities. INQuest's participants will attempt to solve the mystery based on clues provided by print ads, article clues and www.inquestor.com. INQuest is the first multi-level media game launched in the Philippines by Euro RSCG, the 5th largest communications network that specializes in creating ideas that engage brands with consumers.

ROL MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER SLATED IN TAGAYTAY

The Reaching out for the Lord (ROL) Series of the Tuklasan Sector-Marriage Encounter Foundation of the Philippines, is slated to sponsor another Marriage Encounter (ME) weekend seminar from March 4 to 6 at the Angels Hills Seminar and Formation Center, Tagaytay City. The weekend seminar is ideal for married couples seeking fulfilment and rejuvenation in their marriages. The 3-day live-in seminar also hopes to redirect their relationship to be Christ-centered. Scheduled to serve as ecclesial team is Fr. Jess V. Fernandez SJ, Sonny-Nitz Baquiran and Domeng-Lui Alagde. For inquiries, call Rolly-Pearl Carbonell at 641-1265, Gerry-Gina Martinez at 0918-9119680 or Dong-Emie Lalic at 0918-9280293.

SMART HOLDS 1ST SWEEP AWARDS AT SM

The Philippines' leading wireless services provider Smart Communications Inc is set to stage the 1st Sweep Awards for Excellence and Innovation March 4 and 5 at the Megatrade Hall 1 of SM Megamall. An initiative under the company's Smart Wireless Engineering Education Program (Sweep), the event recognizes students who develop outstanding wireless services applications that benefit their schools or communities. The 2-day fair will also feature a 'PalaECEpan' quiz bee, free seminars, a rock concert and various multimedia booths. Entrance for students and faculty is free. Strategic marketing communications firm TeamAsia manages the event. Shown, seated from left, are Dexter Deyto, assistant vice president for SM Megatrade, Monette Iturralde-Hamlin, president of TeamAsia, Louie Tongco, staff development head of Smart NSD-QM, (standing from left), Aimee Abaricia, Smart public affairs officer, Beth Garbo, exhibit manager of SM Megamall, and Cynthia Capua, Smart NSD-QM engineer.

British chamber welcomes FATF decision

THE BRITISH Chamber of Commerce (BCC) welcomes the decision of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to remove the Philippines from their list of non-cooperating countries in respect to anti-money laundering legislation and enforcement.

"The decision greatly improves the international image of the Philippines with existing and prospective investors and will allow international investors to look more favorably on the country as a safer place to invest and do business. The government, the SEC, and the Bangko Central should be congratulated on creating the environment in which the FATF feel confident. Not only does this decision assist international investors but also our overseas workers who will now find remitting funds back to their families easier to complete and cheaper", says Geoffrey Short OBE, BCC chair.

The British Chamber of Commerce views this decision as another positive event that shows the Philippines as being able to seriously compete in the international arena for international investment and business. The Chamber looks forward to the continued growth and liberalization of the business and commercial environment.

Awards set for RP's top 10 architecture firms

THE COUNTRY'S top 10 architecture firms and 70 other companies in Asia will receive awards for their contribution to the built environment in 2005.

The Top Ten Awards will be given at an exclusive ceremony at The Peninsula Manila on March 4 by BCI Asia, the leading provider of construction information in Southeast Asia and Greater China.

The awardees, according to BCI Asia, are Asya Design Partners, Edward Co Tan + Architects GF & Partners, Architects Co, Jonathan O. Gan and Associates, Nestor S. Mangio & Associates, Palafox Associates, Recto + Casas Associates, RMJM Philippines Inc, R. Villarosa Architects, and WV Coscolluela & Associates.

70 other awardees

BCI Asia country manager Apple Patricio said the Top Ten 2005 Awards would also be given to 70 other companies in Asia at ceremonies in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Profiles of the Top Ten 2005 award winners are available at www.bciasia.com. A CD of images of future buildings being designed by the awardees will be made available at the awards ceremonies, or upon request.

"The Top Ten Awards was conceived by BCI Asia to give recognition to the market leaders in architecture. To provide an objective ranking, BCI Asia aggregated the value of each architecture firm's projects under design or breaking ground between October 2003 and September 2004," Patricio said.

"Over that period, BCI Asia's research staff interviewed more than 100,000 architects, developers and engineers in compiling 40,000 detailed reports on $400 billion worth of future buildings and construction projects. From this research, the leader providers of architectural and design services were determined," Patricio explained.

Describing the Top Ten Awards as the market's stamp of approval for architectural firms operating in Asia, BCI Asia chair Dr. Matthias Krups said:

"There are today many awards that recognize architecture in its artistic, aesthetic or even economic manifestation. However, when it comes to identifying those firms that most consistently and broadly meet or exceed their clients' expectations, there has been, so far, no reliable measure. The Top Ten 2005 Awards intend to fill that void. They provide an objective measure for the best of the best in architecture in Asia. Developers and others procuring architectural services need look no further to ascertain the top players in their market."

BCI Asia, in conjunction with prestigious Architecture Asia and Architecture China journals, will present the awards to the 80 winning firms from Asia's eight key markets in the first quarter of 2005.

Patron awards

At the same time, Patron Awards will be bestowed on architectural firms that have excelled in the use of their respective patrons' particular building technology. These awards are given by the building industry's world-leading suppliers-Autodesk, Hansgrohe, Nippon Paint, Philips, and Schindler Lifts.

More information can be obtained from BCI Asia's Philippine office at the LKG Tower, Unit 2304, 6801-6803 Ayala Avenue, Makati City (with telephone numbers 884-1122, fax 884-1121, or e-mail manila@bciasia.com).

In the Philippines, BCI Asia is the first and only provider of construction information on an industrywide, nationwide and regionwide bases, giving its subscribers an effective access to trade and investment prospects, new technologies, hard-to-find products and services, and vast opportunities for construction projects, supply contracts, and all the answers for specific requirements in making sound corporate and procurement decisions.

Bits Clips

Wedding banquets in limelight

WEDDING caterers take center stage in Wedding Expo Philippines on March 5 and 6 at the NBC Tent, Bonifacio Global City, from elegant banquet set-ups and lavish reception decors to simple yet tasteful styling to complement sumptuous wedding menus. The Philippines' top food caterers will present their best in the latest styles and newest trends on how to prepare a feast for wedding parties. VS&F Classic Food International, one of the country's premiere wedding caterers and acknowledged master in on-the-spot cooking, will take the lead at the Wedding Expo Philippines' 6th edition. Now on its 4th year, Wedding Expo Philippines is the country's biggest, most comprehensive, and most respected wedding fair. Free admission is offered for those who pre-register online at www.themesnmotifs.com. For inquiries, call Themes & Motifs, the event's producer and organizer, at 371-7983, 410-0032, 635-3267, or visit www.themesnmotifs.com.

Feati alumni sets homecoming

FEATI University Alumni Association proudly invites all graduates and former students of Feati University to join the grand alumni homecoming and election of officers on March 5, 6 p.m., at the Philippine Columbian Association, Plaza Dilao, Paco, Manila. For more information, call Jonathan F. del Rosario at 886-3043, 0918-9296993, Gilbert B. Magbutay at 682-7114, 0920-9226441 or Lina A. Santos at 874-6082, 0917-8555396.

'A Reading of Love Letters'

PRESS Cafe at the Powerplant will hold the first in a series of live readings on Friday, March 4, at 7:30 p.m. Presented by Globe Telecom and Fully Booked, "A Reading of Love Letters" will feature Gabe Mercado and Carelle Mangaliag. This event is free of charge and Globe Telecom subscribers will be entitled to a free drink. Plays to be read include "Basted," a bittersweet collection of love letters between two employees at a Christmas Kris Kringle, written by Tony Perez, and excerpts from "Love Stories of the Fifties," a compilation of letters that were the result of a contest held by Kislap magazine in the 1950s, edited by Dr. Isagani Cruz. Interested parties are encouraged to reserve tables at Press Cafe for the evening of the readings. Press Cafe is located at Level R1, Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City, adjacent to Fully Booked. Call 756-5001 to 04, or the Fully Booked Marketing Department at 751-0381/83.

Itzamatch me at The Coffee Beanery

WITH THE fast-paced lifestyles of today's generation of young people, meeting new friends and potential life partners may take a back seat. Itzamatch.com-the country's fast rising dating website and The Coffee Beanery-a coffeeshop chain known as the home of Latte Art and award-winning concoctions-join hands for "speedmatching", a popular mode of dating among youths in Europe and America, geared for busy singles who want to meet other singles in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The speedmatching, dubbed as "Itzamatch Me at the Beanery," will be held on March 4 at 7:30 p.m. at The Coffee Beanery outlet at the Metrowalk Commercial Complex, Meralco Ortigas Center, Pasig City. This is a special invitation to itzamatch members only. For more details, log on to www.itzamatch.com or call 0917-5323299.

Lenten retreat

TWO LENTEN Season-related activities are in store for the lay faithful when the Lay Formation Center of the San Carlos Seminary, on Edsa, Guadalupe, Makati City, holds a conference on the Holy Week Liturgy on March 4, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. and a Lenten Recollection on March 12, 8 a.m. to 12. Rev. Fr. Genaro Diwa of the ministry for liturgical affairs speaks on March 4, while Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales talks on the Lenten renewal on March 12. Admission is free.

Color your summer

EVERYONE looks forward to summer, especially the kids. At Li'l Hands Club, it is also time to keep the creative juices flowing. Li'l Hands Club is inviting children 15 years old and below for a Fun Day on March 5 (12 noon onwards) at the Insular Life's Employees Lounge, 12F Insular Life Building in Makati City. Existing Li'l Hands Club members get free entrance to this afternoon of treats and surprises, among others: Mongol/Lotus Colors of Anime; Crayola Colored Necklace for your Tot; Li'l Hands Colorful Kiddie Fan; Each Color tells a story; Gimme Color games. Plus, there are freebies for the early birds. Gifts for the kiddie guests in the most Colorful outfit await winners, plus mascot appearance by Mr. Mongol, Ms. Crayola, and Li'l Hands Douglas the Dog. To participate, non-members can apply for membership on the event itself. For more information, call 568-5868 or 842-1515, or e-mail Club@lilhands.com.

Durano heads RP delegates

THE DOT is leading a Philippine delegation consisting of other international tourism offices, airlines, tour operators and travel agencies, to the Guangzhou International Travel Fair (GITF) from March 4 to 6 in China. Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano says the country's participation in GITF 2005 will provide the Philippines an invaluable opportunity to strengthen its market presence in China, one of its key target markets for outbound travelers. The GITF was initiated in 1993 and is now ranked as one of the most important annual international travel exhibitions in the Asia-Pacific region.

PES 42nd annual meeting

THE PHILIPPINE Economic Society (PES) will hold its 42nd annual meeting on March 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Assembly Hall, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. With the conference theme of "Beating the Odds," the whole-day affair aims to promote active exchange of ideas on major economic issues. Keynote speakers include Felino "Jun" Palafox, Jr, architect, urban planner and founder of Palafox Associates; Secretary Romulo Neri will discuss the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan; Governor Rafael Buenaventura of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will be the luncheon speaker. Interested parties can call Tess Paulino (885-5609, 885-5601), Ione de Leon (885-5608), or Barbara (893-9578).

Makiling students in focus

OPENING the month-long focus on graduating students of the Philippine High School for the Arts PHSA) in Makiling, Laguna, this March 4 at 6 p.m. in "Paco Park Presents" ate pianists Miriam Dungog and Anne Barraquio. Thea Perez is program host. "Paco Park Presents" is a weekly cultural project of the National Parks Development Committee and the National Broadcasting Network. It is aired weekly on NBN-Channel 4 from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. every Tuesday and from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays. Admission to "Paco Park Presents" is free.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that on March 1, 2005 First Quezon City Insurance Company, Inc. has been placed under liquidation for it failed to meet the minimum paid-up capital requirement of P50,000,000.00 under Department Order No 115-93 dated December 2, 1993 since September 30, 2002 when it was initially required to do so up to the present and has therefore remained insolvent and incapable of resuming business operation.

Creditors may file their claims with complete supporting papers with the Conservator for settlement from assets which may be gathered and collected.

The Conservator holds office at 7th Floor, Cityland Condominium 10 Tower 2, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

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ATB71 - AGRI LAND
L.A. 12,687 sqm.
Maharlika H-way, Batal, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price P 1,522,000

ATB72 - AGRI LOT
L.A. 4,306 sqm.
Brgy. Ramos, San Isidro
Min. Bid Price P 275,000

ATB73 - AGRI LOT
L.A. 15,533 sqm.
Brgy. Arabiat, Echague
Min. Bid Price P 932,000

ATB74 - AGRI LOT
L.A. 11,250 sqm.
Bo. Quezon, San Isidro
Min. Bid Price P 765,000

ATB75 - AGRI LOT
L.A. 850 sqm.
Bo. Ramon, San Isidro
Min. Bid Price P 204,000

ATB77 - 2 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 3,006 sqm.
Maharlika H-way, Sinayon
Min. Bid Price P 1,600,000

ATB78 - 2 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 15,760 sqm.
San Mateo H-way, San Mateo
Min. Bid Price P 2,154,000

ATB79 - 4-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 531 sqm.
Panganiban Street, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price P 10,000,000

ATB80 - COMM'L LOT
L.A. 853 sqm.
City Road, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price P 8,000,000

ATB81 - 4 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 3,164 sqm.
Patul Road, Santiago City
Min. Bid Price P 1,519,000

ATB82 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 380 sqm.
Ilang Ilang Road, Rosario
Min. Bid Price P 192,000

ATB83 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 380 sqm.
Alvarez, Plaridel
Min. Bid Price P 248,000

ATB84 - 3 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 906 sqm.
Alicia San Mateo Road, Alicia
Min. Bid Price P 2,100,000

ATB85 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,299 sqm.
Purok Banyag, Alicia
Min. Bid Price P 1,319,000

ATB86 - RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,704 sqm.
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QUEZON CITY

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Amada 641-4158 641-4159

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Mkti nr Ayala P1T Ldy 8974697

Prj3 studio lady 3.5T 9137513

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FOR LEASE

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TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT BENEDICTO R. MATANGUIHAN AN AFFIDAVIT OF CHANGE OF BUSINESS NAME OF BENYOL CONSTRUCTION, OPERATING UNDER BUSINESS LICENSE NO. 20535 ISSUED BY THE PHILIPPINE CONTRACTOR'S ACCREDITATION BOARD (PCAB) WITH BUSINESS ADDRESS AT POBLACION 1, VICTORIA, ORIENTAL MINDORO, WAS CHANGED TO BENYOL CONSTRUCTION & SUPPLY TO OPERATE UNDER THE SAME BUSINESS LICENSE AND AT THE SAME BUSINESS ADDRESS. AS PER DOC. NO. 343; PAGE NO 70; BOOK NO. XII; SERIES OF 2005 OF NOTARY PUBLIC ARISTEDES A. MARAMOT.
(PDI-March 4, 2005)

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1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081/82

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE is hereby given that ALORASAN REALTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Stock Certificate Nos. 005; 031; 042; 046 & 050 representing 726 shares issued in the name of MARIA LINA S. VELAYO were lost as per Affidavit of Loss dated Feb. 24, 2005 of Notary Public Atty. Lope M. Velasco of Makati City and entered in his Notarial Registry as Document No. 25, Page No. 06, Book No. 41-A, Series of 2005. (PDI Mar. 4, 2005)

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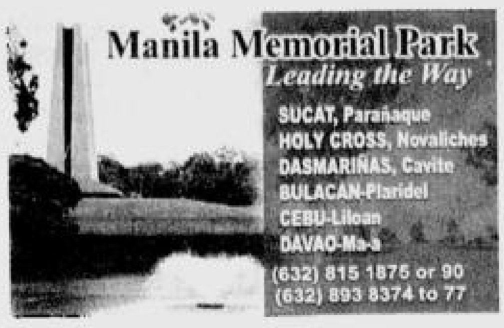

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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

"A great man is he
who does not lose his
family's heart!"

On March 4, 2005, the 8th death anniversary of

BENITO LOZANO MERCADO, JR.

Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Our Lady of Lourdes	Kanlaon, Quezon City	5:30 am
Sacred Heart	Morning Breeze, Caloocan City	6:00 am
St. Gabriel	Potrero, Malabon	6:00 am
Queen of Peace Chapel	Banaue, Quezon City	6:20 am
St. Alphonsus Mary De Liguori	Magallanes Village	6:15 am
OMI Chapel	Mapayapa I, Quezon City	6:30 am
St. Benedict Chapel	Alabang Hills, Alabang	6:15 am
Divine Mercy	Mapayapa I, Quezon City	6:00 am

By his loving wife, **Nenita Vergel de Dios**; children & grandchildren: **Rene, Timothy** and **Angel**; **Glenn & Cholie Laya, Denise** and **David**; **Gary & Melissa Zamuco, Arianna** and **Roque**; **Ryan & Tricia Aguila, Vino** and **Sofia**; only daughter **Lidie Rose**; his sister, **Teresita Lugue**; sisters-in-law **Sr. Lilia Hilario, ICM** and **Corazon V. Santos**; nephews and nieces.

Prayers requested for the eternal repose of his soul!

With Deepest Sympathy & Heartfelt Condolences to
The family of the late

Mary Ebitha Y. Dy

Board Member
Asian Media Information and Communication Centre

Dr. Mary Ebitha Dy will be remembered as a longstanding supporter and friend of AMIC. She will be sadly missed.

From:
Management and Staff of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore

---

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CLASSIFIEDS

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Ad No. 2005-004

PD Ref No.: PB050216-RM0012/PR No.: SD-05-009208

The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE (TRANSCO-BAC) FOR HEAD OFFICE**, wishes to invite interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid on the items listed below:

Quantity	Item Description	PR No.	Approved Budget
One (1) Lot	Supply and Delivery of 60 units Caliber 40 Firearm	SD-05-009208	P3,000,000.00

1. The Bidding Documents will be available for issuance starting **March 4, 2005 to April 5, 2005** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)** per set.
2. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **10:00 a.m. of April 6, 2005** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date is declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be rescheduled on a later date that will be announced through a bid bulletin. Submission of documents must be clear, legible and readable. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.
3. Pre-bid conference will be held on **March 17, 2005 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
4. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
5. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
6. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - March 4 & 10, 2005)

HOPE CHRISTIAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INC.
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ON MARCH 6, 2005, SUNDAY 1 P.M.
IN THE AFTERNOON
AT THE HOPE CHRISTIAN AUDITORIUM

PNB DONATES RELIEF GOODS IN INFANTA, QUEZON

The Philippine National Bank, through its Pagkakaisa ng Bayan Drive, recently distributed relief goods to typhoon victims of Infanta, Quezon. Volunteers from PNB Financial Center and personnel from the Bank's Southern Luzon region drove to Quezon and joined forces in distributing goods purchased from the proceeds of the fund drive and donations from clients and employees as well. Previous to this, PNB also distributed relief goods in the towns in Nueva Ecija that were hit hardest by four typhoons late last year.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF SALE THRU AUCTION

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be accepting sealed offers for the Sale thru Auction of the following commodities.

A. US Long Grains Hard Milled White (4% brokens) under 2004 USPL-480 Title 1 Program:

Commodity	Volume	Indicative Price	Location
Non-fortified and Iron fortified Rice	57,010 MT more or less	P1,330.00/bag	NFA-NCR and Region III Warehouses

B. Vietnam White Rice (20% brokens)

Commodity	Volume	Indicative Price	Location
Vietnam White Rice	460 MT more or less	P850.00/bag	Minprocor Whse, Del Monte Ave., Q.C.

The date, time and place of pre-auction and auction conferences are as follows:

	Pre-Auction		Auction Proper		
	Date	Time	Date	Time	Place
Commodity A (US Rice)	March 8 March 15	10:00 AM 10:00 AM	March 11 March 18	10:05 AM 10:05 AM	NFA Boardroom, 10th Flr., Matimyas Bldg., 101 E Rodriguez Sr., Ave., Q.C.
Commodity B (Vietnam Rice)	March 8 March 15	2:00 PM 2:00 PM	March 11 March 18	2:05 PM 2:05 PM	– do –

To qualify, all interested bidders are required to submit the following documents:

a. Original and xerox copy of NFA license (retailing, wholesaling and/or milling).
b. In case of representative, a duly notarized authorization from the owner, partner, chairman or president that he or she is authorized to represent the business entity in the pre-auction, auction proper and all activities thereto.
c. Offer must be accompanied by Bid Bond, equivalent to 10% of the volume bidded in the form of Cashier's or Manager's check payable to NFA issued by a reputable commercial bank in Metro Manila.

Interested bidders may secure the terms and conditions starting March 8, 2005 at DMO OCD, 5th Floor from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. For any inquiries, please contact Ms. Espie Tecson at tel. nos. 712-15-72 and 712-17-08.

Bid documents will be available on March 8, 2005 and March 15, 2005 to qualified bidders/offerors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 for commodity A and P1,000.00 for Commodity B, respectively.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality thereof, and to accept only such bids that are advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **CONRADO DL. IBAÑEZ**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – March 3 & 4, 2005)

LEYTE V ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
P.O. Box 162, Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City
Tel. Nos. (053) 561-4111 / 255-7211 Telefax (053) 561-4075

INVITATION TO BID

The Leyte V Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LEYECO V), Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City, Leyte, invites all eligible suppliers to submit bids for the supply of Line Materials, Hardware and Equipment for the following line expansion projects funded under NEA Subsidy 2004 for 4th Leyte District:

1. Zone 5, Brgy. Talisayan, Albuera
2. Purok 7, Brgy. Concepcion, Ormoc City
3. GK-Rotary, Brgy. Tambulilid, Ormoc City
4. Purok II, Pangpang, Brgy. San Juan, Ormoc City
5. Canduwang, Brgy. Cabaliwan, Merida

Bid documents shall be issued to interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred Pesos Only (P500.00) starting March 11, 2005.

Pre-bid conference will be held on March 17 at 9 o'clock in the morning at LEYECO V Boardroom, Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City.

Sealed bids will be received by the Pre-bids and Awards Committee (PBAC), at LEYECO V Main Office in Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City, Leyte on March 31, 2005 at 1:30 in the afternoon, at which time and place said proposals will be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.

LEYECO V reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any minor defects or informalities therein and to accept any or all offers or proposals as may be considered most responsive and advantageous to the Cooperative. It assumes no obligation whatsoever for any expenses or loss that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **JOVENAL R. ALESNA**
General Manager

(PDI – March 4, 6 & 7, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(Public Bidding)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHILHEALTH) wishes to invite bidders for **STORAGE UPGRADE.**

Request for Proposal (RFP) can be obtained from March 4 to March 17, 2005, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Office of the Secretariat - Bids and Awards Committee (OSBAC), Room 1804, 18th Floor, City State Centre #709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php **3,750.00.**

The **PhilHealth** had provided funds for this project for which this invitation is issued. The approved budget for this contract is Php**7,500,000.00.**

A pre-bid conference will be held on March 18, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. at the OSBAC (Rm. 1804).

The bidders shall prepare their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposal in three separate sealed envelopes and drop in the respective bid boxes located at the above-mentioned address.

Submission of bids will be on April 13, 2005 on or before 12:00 noon at the OSBAC. Opening of bids will follow at 1:30 p.m. at the same venue. Any bidder who comes late will not be entertained. The official time clock shall be the wall clock located at Room 1804. Any bid submitted after the cut-off time will not be accepted.

The BAC-ITR shall determine if each prospective bidder is eligible to participate in the bidding by examining the completeness of each prospective bidder's eligibility requirements or statements against a checklist of requirements, using the **non-discretionary "pass/fail"** criteria.

To guarantee the faithful performance by the winning bidder of his/her obligations under the contract prepared in accordance with the bidding documents, he/she shall post a Bid Security in any of the following forms and amount:

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	Php 75,000.00
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%)	Php 112,500.00
Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)	Php 187,500.00
Foreign Government Guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)	Php 7,500,000.00

We look forward to your participation in this worthwhile endeavor.

PhilHealth reserves the right to waive any formality on the eligibility requirements and of this project. Furthermore, PhilHealth reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd) **MELINDA C. MERCADO**
SVP, Health Insurance Operations Sector and
Chairperson, BAC-ITR

(PDI – March 4 & 11, 2005)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The assets are being offered on an "as-is, where-is" basis, at the Indicative Prices presented below. Sealed offers shall be received at 3:00 p.m. on the following schedules at PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Asset Name/ Location	Indicative Price (In Philippine Currency)	Date of Submission Of Offers
Carruf Development Corp. Land (1,504 sq.m.) located along Maytubig St., Brgy. 710 Zone 78, Malate, Manila	P24,816,000	March 15, 2005
Delta Motors Corp. Land (182.30 sq.m.), located at Brgy. Obrero, Tondo, Manila	P800,000	March 16, 2005

Interested parties may secure the sale documents from the PMO Marketing Dept. at non-refundable fees of P500.00 for Carruf and P300.00 for Delta.

Interested parties are advised to deal directly with the PMO Marketing Department.

For more information, please contact the PMO Marketing Dept. at telephone nos. 817-6331; 817-8762; 818-4733; 892-2145 fax no. 818-0906.

(PDI–March 4, 5 & 6, 2005)

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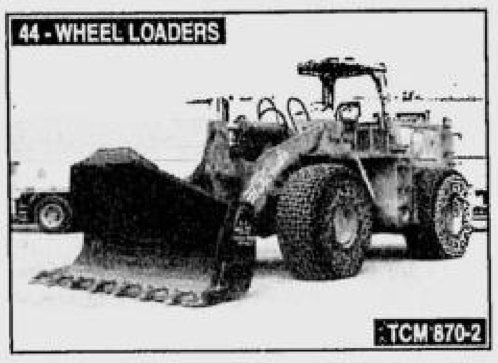
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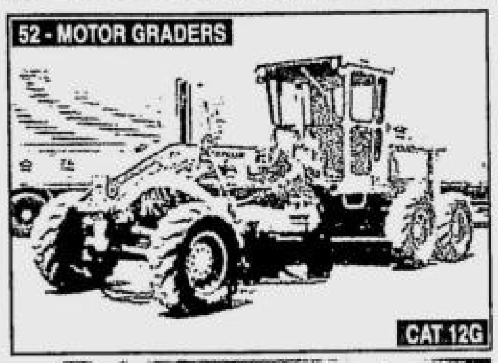
TCM 870-2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BUSINESS

UMPC, Belgian firm ink deal

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FUNDING for the $117-million rehabilitation and extension of the Coastal Road may yet be secured after UEM-MARA Philippines Corp. entered into a joint venture agreement with a European partner.

Jennifer Bote, general manager of UEM-MARA Philippines Corp., said in a telephone interview that UMPC, the lead proponent of the Coastal Road project, finalized last Feb. 10 a partnership deal with Belgium's Jan De Nul, a global expert in dredging and land reclamation works.

Bote said the Belgian firm had been engaged in reclamation works for the Diosdado Macapagal Avenue and did most of the civil works for the Philippine Reclamation Authority's (formerly Public Estates Authority) reclamation projects.

"Part of the deal is that Jan De Nul would infuse $15.3 million in equity, which is one of the requirements provided in our $70-million loan with the International Finance Corp.," she said.

IFC, a unit of the World Bank, had canceled the loan effective last Nov. 15 on grounds that UMPC failed to tap a strategic partner within one year as required under the loan agreement.

"The IFC has expressed renewed interest in revalidating the loan with the entry of Jan De Nul," Bote said.

The project covers the rehabilitation of the 6.5-kilometer R1 Expressway, popularly known as the Coastal Road stretching from Baclaran to Bacoor, Cavite, and its link-up with the C5 Road in Taguig via the Sucat Interchange traversing the South Luzon Expressway.

Phase 2 covers the 11.2-km extension of the Coastal Road from Bacoor to Noveleta in Cavite, which would provide direct links to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and the Port of Manila.

However, IFC country manager Vipul Bhagat clarified in a separate interview that the lender was not reexamining UMPC's loan application.

"We would be reappraising [only when] all the requirements have been completed," Bhagat said. "But there is no certainty that we would reevaluate."

When asked what the requirements were, he declined to answer saying this was between IFC and UMPC.

Bote, meanwhile, said UMPC had decided to do the extension phase first considering delays in settling right-of-way issues on the R1 link with C5.

She said the company had also revised the design of a viaduct that is part of the Coastal Road extension.

"We have shortened this from more than 4.23 kilometers running from Bacoor to Kawit to just about one kilometer. We expect this change to lessen the project cost," she said.

Bote expressed confidence that work on the Coastal Road project—also known as the Manila-Cavite Expressway—would soon prosper after "IFC commits to assess the new project studies within the shortest time possible."

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E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Out of stock, out of mind

By Yayu Javier
Contributor

HAVE you ever experienced the frustration of going to your neighborhood supermarket only to find that it ran out of the ingredients for the dish you're preparing for guests coming in an hour? Or to the nearest drugstore that tells you there's an epidemic, that's why it ran out of medicine?

Chances are, you got a substitute or went to another store, depending on how badly you needed the product or brand.

That's bad news for retailers and manufacturers.

For the retailer, you lost the loyalty of your customer. And for the manufacturer, you lost the sale because the consumer opted for a substitute.

Running out of stock (OOS) in the fast-moving consumer goods industry remains a serious problem for retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers.

With an average out-of-stock rate of 8.3 percent around the world, the problem has been estimated to cost these players some $30 billion in lost sale opportunities.

Over the years, attempts to remedy the situation by strengthening the kinks in the supply chain have been largely inadequate. Bold, new solutions are needed today.

The good news is that there is a method developed in the United States that can identify the root causes of running out stock, by analyzing daily point-of-sale data or transaction log (T-Log) data.

Retailers and manufacturers can then quantify and reduce OOS, as well as recap OOS activity by chain, store, category and item.

Available solutions

Traditionally, retailers have tried to address OOS by doing a manual audit that requires a lot of manpower and takes a long time.

While these solutions are relatively effective, they identify and address situations that already exist.

Analysis of daily data or transaction log (T-Log) data looks more closely at the OOS phenomenon.

It reports OOS using the retailer's own product unit sales movement patterns.

Here's what this process of data analysis can do:

- Identify items that regularly run out of stock
- Identify stores with OOS problems.
- Determine the day of week, and the time of day, when OOS are most likely to occur.
- Quantify the impact of OOS on the business in terms of revenue and profits.
- Measure success when a change is implemented.

Item velocity, which measures how fast a product is sold, is calculated for every item and in every store.

Knowing how many days it takes a product to be sold allows the retailer or manufacturer to come up with a schedule when an item should be purchased. If an item misses its scheduled purchase, it is deemed OOS until the next purchase.

The process will trigger the following actions:

- Determine which items need more shelf space.
- Identify items which need more display space when promoted.
- Optimize store delivery schedules to reduce OOS rates.
- Optimize store staffing schedules to provide the help needed on peak days or times.
- Assess the performance of store staff and measure improvements in OOS rates over time.
- Measure the success of programs that relate to OOS.

Manufacturers introduce tens of thousands of new items each year in the consumer packaged goods marketplace.

Speed to shelf, which refers to the number of days it takes a product to move from the manufacturer's warehouse to the supermarket or retail shelf, is key to the success of these

OUT/ B2-2

RUNNING out of stock remains a serious problem

Japanese firm finds 'solutions' to modern woes

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MARKETING STRATEGY

HOWARD is a typical, modern day electronics buff.

Armed with the latest gadgets, he shoots millions of bytes and pixels of photos and videos, downloads thousands of songs, and accumulates hundreds of files in the office and at home.

Problem is, like most of today's consumers, Howard does not really make the most of his gadgets, making him give up one for another that promises new and better ways of doing things.

For Hiroaki Kobayashi, president and chief executive of Sony Philippines Inc.), it is high time to make sense of the modern jumble of equipment.

"People nowadays own a variety of (gadgets)," Kobayashi says. "This is good, but most people do not know how to make these things work together for their greater enjoyment."

For instance, how many of us store into oblivion millions of bytes and pixels of pictures we took with a digicam?

More often than we care to admit, these unprinted photos and raw videos are consigned to our list of things to do.

To make life easier for electronics buyers like Howard, Kobayashi says his company offers "Sony Solutions."

Kobayashi says the Sony Solutions basically means seamlessly using the gadgets and appliances together.

The catchword is connectivity.

"People can't catch up if changes are very fast, but with our solutions we want to help people understand what they can enjoy," he says.

Imagine Howard filming an adventure trek in Mount Pinatubo with the Sony CyberShot. He then prints videocaps with the Sony Photo

JAPANESE/ B2-2

Colette's
Buko Pie at Pasalubong

"Our small family business wouldn't be able to take a big bite at success without the help of BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK's SME Business Loans."

Plaridel Dela Cruz
Owner, Colette's Buko Pie

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK TELLS A DELICIOUS TALE OF SUCCESS.

San Pablo City is proud of Plaridel "Ed" Dela Cruz, owner of Colette's Buko Pie. This buko pie entrepreneur started the business in 1989, and after 16 years, Colette's daily buko pie production has quadrupled.

This business was indeed family-inspired. It all started when Ed and Regina Dela Cruz would visit their daughter Colette, who was then studying in UP Los Baños. The couple's frequent visits to the area introduced Regina to the delicious taste of buko pie. Realizing the potentials of a buko pie business in their hometown San Pablo City where buko pies were non-existent during that time, Regina pitched the idea of starting a buko pie business to her husband, Ed. Thus, Colette's Buko Pie was created, which was fondly named after their daughter.

BPI Family Savings Bank supported this family endeavor through its SME Business Loans. As such, the Dela Cruz family was able to expand their business.

Today, Colette's Buko Pie has numerous branches all over Laguna, Batangas and Cavite. Aside from buko pie, they now sell other delicious pasalubong items like espasol, uraro, pastillas, broas and barquillos.

Truly, this family has tasted success with the help of BPI Family Savings Bank's SME Business Loans.

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BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

Japanese firm finds . . .

From page B2-1

Printer and make an album with his computer's CD burner.

With the Sony software called Picture Package, Howard can make a slide show or music video of his pictures—put in his favorite music, select visual effects, store it in a CD and share the experience with his family and friends who can view it with a TV set or a PC.

If he used DVD Handycam, Howard can do what the Eskimo guys did in the Sony commercial—shoot, play and share.

With a little extra effort, he can enhance the video by putting in music and effects with the use of a PC and burn disc copies for sharing.

Picture solution

The picture package solution allows for easy and basic editing of photos and videos taken with the Cyber-shot and Handycam.

Users of the DVD enjoyment solution can shoot images and visuals, watch them on a Sony DVD player and Sony Wega and burn copies with the Sony DVD burner.

The direct print solution makes it possible to shoot with the Cyber-shot and print instantly with the Sony Direct Printer.

These are just three of the eight solutions that Sony has developed for consumers to make the most of its products.

Kobayashi says the solutions are also a way of stimulating the market by showing how consumers can get the most value out of their money.

SPI expects sales to grow double digit this year through the solutions concept.

Continuing a tradition

The solutions continue a tradition in Sony—a combination of the Latin word "sonus" (the rootword of "sound" and "sonic") with "sonny," which described the young engineers and workers that nurtured the company when it was starting in a war-ravaged Japan in the 1940s.

SONY Philippines President Hiroaki Kobayashi demonstrates another way of using a Sony Handycam under the Sony Solutions program. JOSEPH AGCAOILI

The company is known for many breakthroughs in audio and electronic products, such as the transistor radio (1955), the Trinitron color TV (1968), Walkman personal stereo (1979), Compact Disc Player (1982), Betacam for broadcast use (1982), floppy disk (1983), Handycam (1985), MiniDisc (1992), Playstation (1994), DVD (1997) and AIBO, the entertainment robot dog (1999).

"With the Solutions, we want to introduce a new way of doing things (with our products) and we are here because they need guidance," Kobayashi says.

"In a way, it's like teaching people how to ride a bike," he says.

Out of stock, out of mind

From page B2-1

items.

Retailers gain an advantage if they are fully stocked with the new item when advertising and promotion campaigns start.

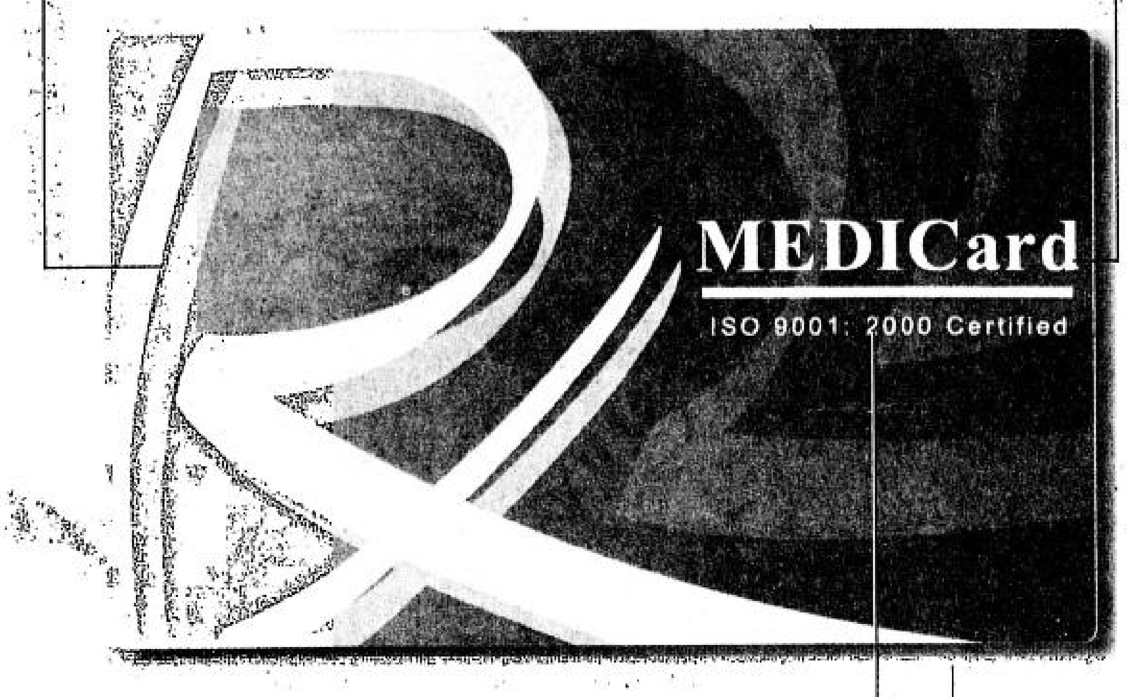
Stores without the item are deemed OOS by shoppers even before the product arrives in the store.

Retailers and manufacturers recognize that it is high time to solve the problem of running of stock.

Failure to do so only means losing a sales opportunity, but also customer loyalty to other retailers who are more reliable.

Addressing the problem, thus, will enhance the retailer's overall image and increase customer loyalty.

(Yayu Javier is country manager of Avanza, Inc., a loyalty and customer relationship marketing company that represents Data Ventures, USA in the Philippines.)



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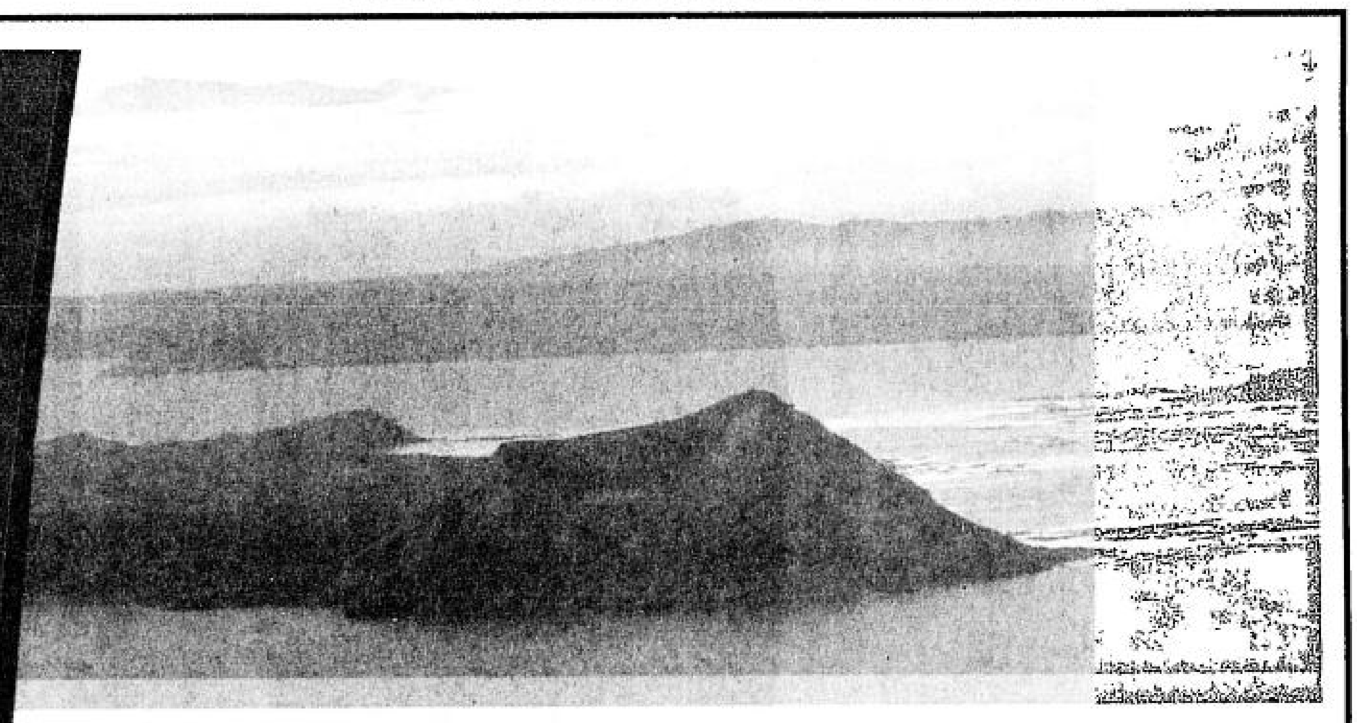

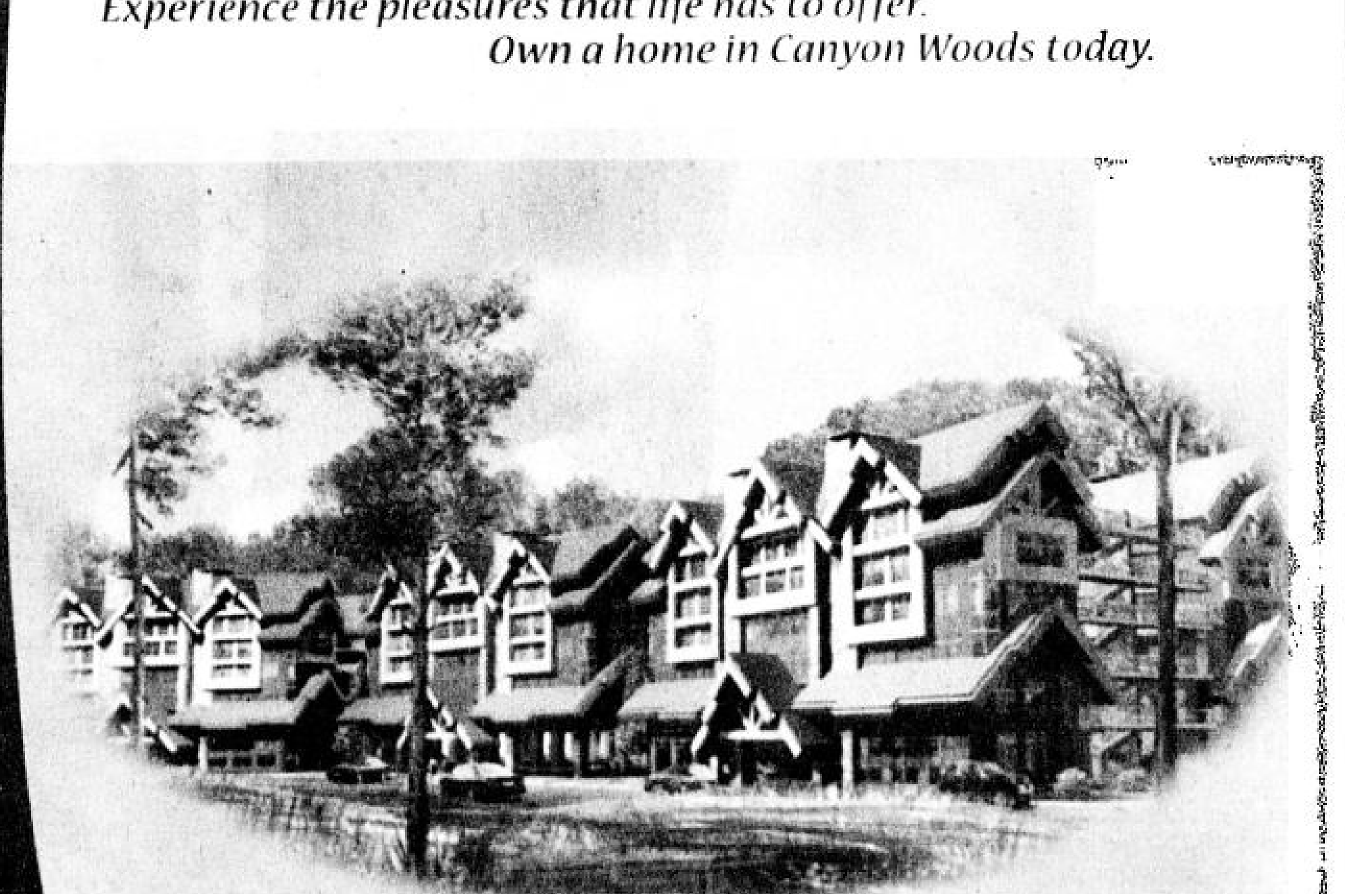

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Case of . . .

From page B2-4

most is smart risk taking skills and the ability to implement and take immediate action.

As you can see, what an MBA gives you and the skills or attitude that you need to become a better entrepreneur can often be incompatible.

So let's start our marketing diagnosis with the state of "confusion" that your MBA may be responsible for.

Incidentally, when teaching market research to entrepreneurs in the Master in Entrepreneurship (ME) program at the Asian Institute of Management, the senior Marketing Rx-er usually starts his class by kidding them: "Dear entrepreneurs. Let me give you a cigarette smoking-like caution about market research and for that matter, about your ME degree."

Then, he would proceed by projecting a PowerPoint slide in poster-like background with this message: "Caution: Formal, scientific market research data and analysis may be detrimental to the health of an entrepreneur's native and creative marketing intuition."

Now, please hold your "denial" for a moment and read on.

We hope you don't mind if we start this marketing diagnosis by saying that the confusion you're in is most likely a case of what we call a potentially lethal marketing viral infection.

We say "lethal" because it's a viral pair: a "market information overflow (MIO) infection" working in tandem with a "market analysis-paralysis (MAP) infection."

The symptom that you are beginning to have—an MIO viral infection—is your feeling "so overwhelmed by the data (you) have been studying."

When your MBA courses exposed you to a range of market information and data, you were unavoidably fascinated. That fascination came from the first impression they give you. They seem so objective and true. You then felt that they were so unlike your personal and subjective acquaintance with what they were saying about market realities. It's the start of a seduction.

So how do you protect yourself?

Always bear in mind that not all market data and information are relevant to the solution of your marketing problem.

In effect, we are saying that you should differentiate between your marketing analysis problem and your marketing strategy problem. It is not analysis that should shape your strategy; it is strategy that should define the relevance of data to your analysis. Let's be more specific in your case.

Direct marketing strategy

Your chosen strategy is, as you said, to do direct marketing by selling your packaged meal "directly to your target signed-up customers through tie-ups with fitness gym, and doctors and dietitian-nutritionists."

This defines your PTM (primary target market) segment: consumers who are fitness gym frequenters, and consumers who consult with doctors and dietitian-nutritionists about their diet needs. We refer to this type of segment as a "naturally occurring segment (NOS)."

The consumers who constitute an NOS are first, easy to identify and locate. Secondly, it is easy to know how to communicate with them in terms of both the necessary communication media and advertising copy.

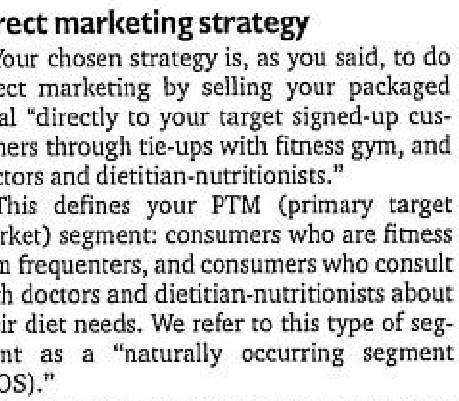
These are the strategic practical advantages of working with the NOS.

This is the first part of your "market analysis." So we've actually been working already on your "market analysis-paralysis (MAP) infection," the second half of your viral marketing infection.

This first part of your "market analysis" sought to specify your target consumers, and to uncover their purchase motivation, that is, the motivating positioning for your packaged meal product.

The second part of your market analysis is the competitor side of the market. And this is where you allowed yourself to be unnecessarily overwhelmed. *(To be continued)*

Email your questions and comments to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net or text us at 0919-314-5412.



PLDT BAGS ASIAMONEY AWARD
Napoleon L. Nazareno, concurrent head of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Smart Communications Inc., recently received the Overall Best Managed Company in the Philippines award for PLDT from Asiamoney, one of Asia's most influential financial magazines.

Breeding social entrepreneurs

From page B2-4

the people, for the people and shall be run by the people.

The Pearl Schools are assured of a customized curricula based on the situational analysis of the most current baseline skills of students and the immediate needs of the community. These curricula will be designed by the sponsor education institution, CIE Global Colleges, through its International Examinations Division.

CIE, as sponsor agency, will provide initial funding for the Pearl Schools.

CIE will share with the Pearl Schools applicable and relevant educational best practices from among private schools here and abroad.

Bridging the gap

This will be an attempt to bridge the educational gap and learning opportunities between the public school system catering to the under-served middle class and exclusive private schools for the elite.

Each Pearl School will be given an instructional blueprint to follow. A system-wide quality assurance will be in place, led by Pearl Principle advocates who are noted academics.

Let it be clear that the Pearl School System is going to be established in support of all the efforts of the Department of Education to improve the quality of basic education.

The Pearl Schools can help fast-track innovations because it does not have to contend with a bureaucracy. This is just like piloting new programs that would otherwise entail huge amounts of funding for research, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

As social entrepreneurs, the Pearl Principle advocates know very well that traditional forms of funding are becoming smaller. There is widespread "donor-fatigue" syndrome because of global recession and economic crises.

But that problem will not get in the way of pursuing the program.

The ultimate goal is for this parallel school system to be self-sufficient, while increasing its social impact within a specific period.

Therefore, social entrepreneurs must also follow a business plan that includes the following:

- Market need—significance of the problem/need this service wishes to address;
- Product/service—must have a unique value proposition;
- Environment analysis—who are doing the same things?
- Marketing plan—what is the target market? The strategies that will be used;
- Financial requirements—sources and uses of capital; projected cash flow. Intellectual property strategy—what intellectual property exists and can it be protected?
- Management team—who are involved and what is their experience?
- Social Return on Investment (SROI)—describe social impact (preferably in qualitative and quantitative terms)

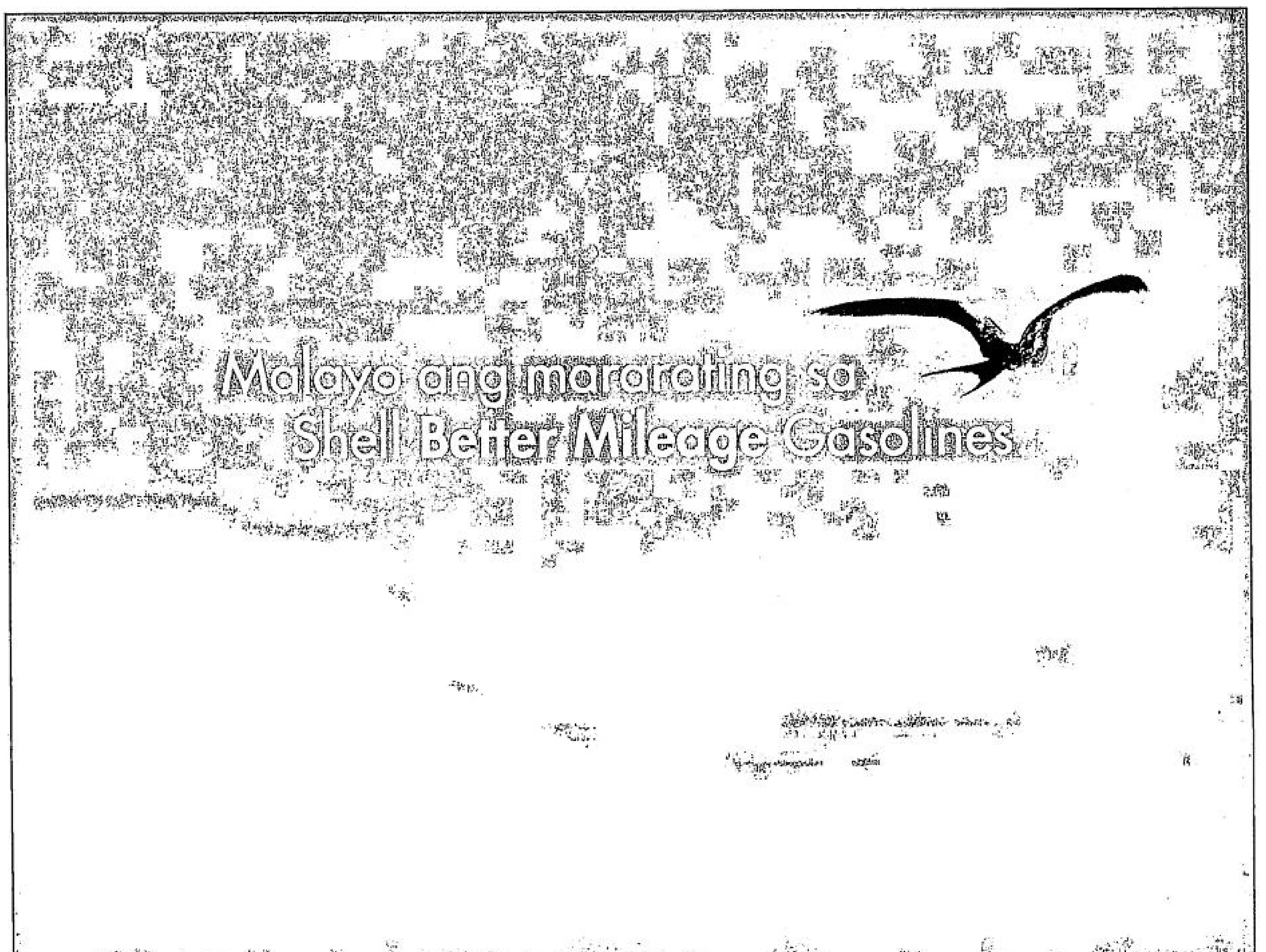
Formula for success

To ensure a successful project, proper planning is necessary. The business plan discussed earlier will form part of the more comprehensive proprietary CIE-GM File Portfolio.

This will be the basis of all processes, systems and standard operating procedures that consists of:

- Project identification and analysis
- Project appraisal and assessment
- Project definition, planning
- Project financial management and approval
- Project management and implementation
- Project monitoring and evaluation
- Project handover with safety nets for continuity and sustainability
- Project "second curve"

For feedback, email ncs.pearl@cie.edu or call CIE Makati 887-2828 or CIE Cebu 233-2522



Your engine needs all the help it can get to go the distance. This is why our new Shell Super Premium, Super Unleaded and Velocity gasoline products are now enhanced with the new Better Mileage formula. Designed to meet the total needs of your fuel system, it maximizes efficiency by cleaning deposits, improving combustion and reducing engine friction. Kaya sa parehong karga, malayo ang mararating mo sa Shell Better Mileage Gasolines.

Case of the confused MBA student

(Part 1)

MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

QUESTION: "My product is a packaged meal (cooled) ready to be heated and served. It is nutritionally balanced and low in fat and calories. In the United States, this is called a "home replacement meal."

This product is also the subject of my MBA business proposal requirement and analyzing the product's market is one of my biggest problems.

My target market includes those who have health problems such as obesity and hypertension, who usually do not have the time to prepare meals and count the calorie or fat content.

I plan to market the product to the AB and upper C markets who value convenience and are becoming more health conscious.

The meals will be delivered to customers who will sign up for a plan, such as a seven-day plan of seven lunch meals and seven dinner meals.

I'm planning to go direct to my market through tie-ups with gyms, doctors and dietitian-nutritionists.

So how should I go about marketing? Who are my competitors? What would be the substitutes? How should I compute the market gap?

I am so overwhelmed by the data I have been studying. I don't know if my competitors are the restaurant and fast-food industries or the "diet industry" such as Herbalife. I will highly appreciate the insights and tips you might be able to share."—*Mrs. J. Cruz, entrepreneur and MBA student*

Answer: To start with, we want you to know that we completely empathize with your situation.

We've seen your kind of problem in a good number of entrepreneurs who thought an MBA program can make them better entrepreneurs.

Of course, we're not saying that an MBA is useless. But if it changes the way your marketing minds naturally works, then a problem arises.

To entrepreneurs—take your MBA with a shovel of salt!

Most entrepreneurs who take MBAs confuse what good an MBA will do with what becoming a better entrepreneur requires most.

What a good MBA gives you is a working appreciation for market information and a sharpening of your market analysis skills.

But you need to appreciate also that these two are different (as we shall explain later in this column). What becoming a better entrepreneur requires

CASE/ B2-3

PEARL PRINCIPLE

Breeding social entrepreneurs

By Nelia Cruz-Sarcol
Contributor

THE DETERIORATING quality of public school education has prompted social entrepreneurs to take action.

POVERTY, unemployment/underemployment, peace and order, deteriorating standards of education, corruption, overpopulation and a national "identity crisis."

These were identified as the biggest problems weighing down on the country's economy during the Pearl Principle National Conference held last year.

The participants presented possible solutions followed by the usual debates. Most of the proposed solutions were "top-to-bottom" strategies.

We are not saying we do not need change at the top. We are in total agreement that we do. But we must be able to do more from where we are standing right now, even without political power and limited resources.

Here is where social entrepreneurs come in. They are those who have the "inexhaustible determination" to persist and see the country's transformation through.

These social entrepreneurs are PEARLS (Passionate, Ethical, Action-oriented, Results-focused and Leaders of Society).

They can lead, inspire, provide a vision, as well as engage people to create something for themselves. Social entrepreneurs are catalysts of change. Pearl Principle advocates are examples of such social entrepreneurs.

Bill Drayton defines a social entrepreneur as someone who recognizes when a part of society is stuck, and then provides new ways to get it unstuck. He or she finds what is not working, and solves the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution and persuading entire societies to take quantum leaps.

He said: "Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionalized the fishing industry."

Social entrepreneurs, however, are just like other entrepreneurs. They also look for "irritants" in the environment and convert these into opportunities.

They do this mainly as a social mission, with the savvy of "combining the very best of the not-for-profit, philanthropic world with the very best of the for-profit, enterprising world," (Bill Strickland, "Genius at Work"). They pursue their goals with the same fervor and discipline as any entrepreneur.

Pearl schools

Some of these social entrepreneurs from among the Pearl Principle advocates have decided to tackle the problem of education as a major project.

They were spurred into action by the dismal results of national achievement tests, which showed that the quality of education has truly deteriorated, particularly in the public school system.

The Philippines' dismal performance in the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and its repeat test was a shocker. It was a reality check so hard to accept.

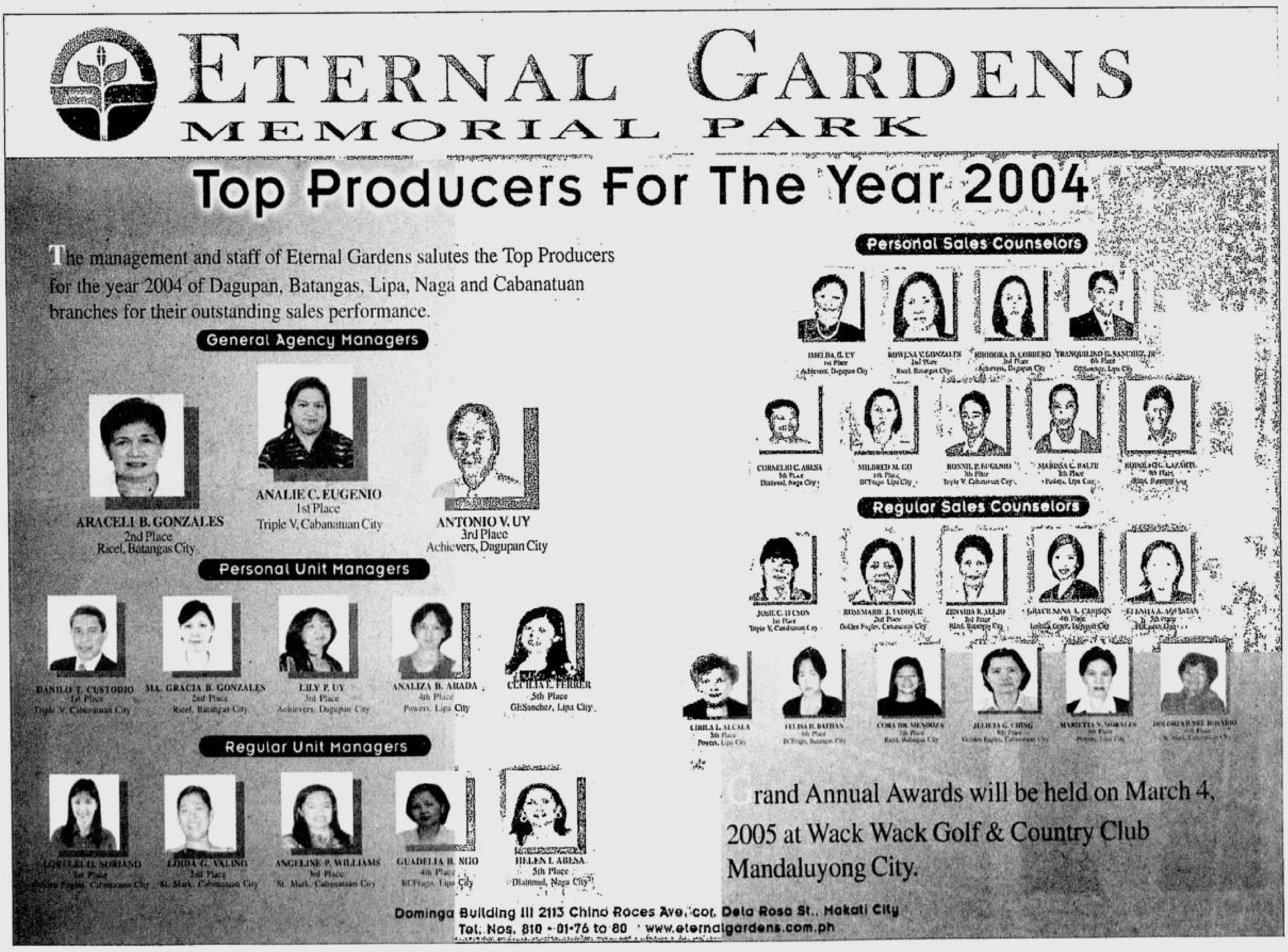
In Science Grade 8, we placed 42nd among 45 countries; in Mathematics, we lodged one level higher at 41st. In Grade 4 Science and Math, we were consistently at 23rd place, out of the 25 participating countries.

The equally discouraging results of the High School Readiness Test have left the Department of Education with no other choice but to put in place the controversial Bridging Programs.

The Pearl Principle National Movement will contribute to the effort of improving education standards by putting up "Pearl schools." These schools will be strategically located nationwide where underserved middle class families live.

The Pearl Schools are envisioned to form part of a parallel school system to that of the Department of Education. These Pearl Schools will rise because of

BREEDING/ B2-3



ETERNAL GARDENS
MEMORIAL PARK

Top Producers For The Year 2004

The management and staff of Eternal Gardens salutes the Top Producers for the year 2004 of Dagupan, Batangas, Lipa, Naga and Cabanatuan branches for their outstanding sales performance.

General Agency Managers

ARACELI B. GONZALES
2nd Place
Ricel, Batangas City

ANALIE C. EUGENIO
1st Place
Triple V, Cabanatuan City

ANTONIO V. UY
3rd Place
Achievers, Dagupan City

Personal Unit Managers

DANILO T. CUSTODIO
1st Place
Triple V, Cabanatuan City

MA. GRACIA B. GONZALES
2nd Place
Ricel, Batangas City

LILY P. UY
3rd Place
Achievers, Dagupan City

ANALIZA B. ARADA
4th Place
Powers, Lipa City

CECILIA E. FERRER
5th Place
GtSanchez, Lipa City

Regular Unit Managers

LORELEI O. SORIANO
1st Place
Golden Eagles, Cabanatuan City

LOIDA G. VALINO
2nd Place
St. Mark, Cabanatuan City

ANGELINE P. WILLIAMS
3rd Place
St. Mark, Cabanatuan City

GUADELIA B. NGO
4th Place
BCTrago, Lipa City

HELEN I. ABESA
5th Place
Diamond, Naga City

Personal Sales Counselors

IMELDA G. UY
1st Place
Achievers, Dagupan City

ROWENA V. GONZALES
2nd Place
Ricel, Batangas City

RHODORA D. CORDERO
3rd Place
Achievers, Dagupan City

TRANQUILINO G. SANCHEZ, JR.
4th Place
GtSanchez, Lipa City

CORNELIO C. ABESA
5th Place
Diamond, Naga City

MILDRED M. GO
6th Place
BCTrago, Lipa City

RONNIL P. EUGENIO
7th Place
Triple V, Cabanatuan City

MARISSA C. BALTU
8th Place
[illegible], Lipa City

RODOLFO G. LAZARTE
9th Place
[illegible]

Regular Sales Counselors

JOSIE C. [illegible]
1st Place
Triple V, Cabanatuan City

ROSEMARIE J. TADIQUE
2nd Place
Golden Eagles, Cabanatuan City

ZENAIDA B. ALEJO
3rd Place
Ricel, Batangas City

GRACE NENA A. [illegible]
4th Place
[illegible], Dagupan City

ELENITA A. [illegible]
5th Place
[illegible]

CIRILA L. ALCALA
5th Place
Powers, Lipa City

FELISA B. BATHAN
6th Place
BCTrago, Batangas City

CORA DE MENDOZA
7th Place
Ricel, Batangas City

JULIETA G. CHING
8th Place
Golden Eagles, Cabanatuan City

MARIETTA N. MORALES
9th Place
Powers, Lipa City

DOLORES B. DEL ROSARIO
10th Place
St. Mark, Cabanatuan City

Grand Annual Awards will be held on March 4, 2005 at Wack Wack Golf & Country Club Mandaluyong City.

Dominga Building III 2113 Chino Roces Ave. cor. Dela Rosa St., Makati City
Tel. Nos. 810-01-76 to 80 www.eternalgardens.com.ph

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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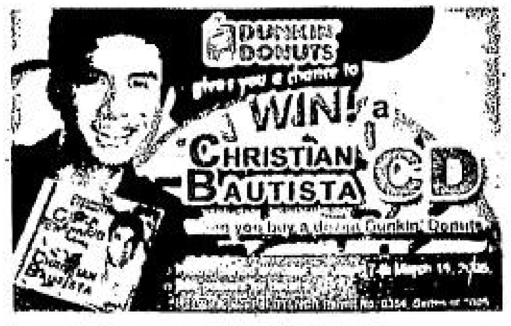
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

LIFESTYLE



Hot book on Vogue editor

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

WHILE the rest of the planet was glued to the Oscars, I stuck to the unauthorized bio of Vogue's **Anna Wintour**, the woman who, arguably, presides virtually over a $100-billion fashion industry worldwide by creating and shattering trends, brands and designers.

People are talking about, or beginning to talk about, **Jerry Oppenheimer**'s "Front Row, Anna Wintour: The Cool Life and Hot Times of Vogue's Editor in Chief." Oppenheimer is the best-selling author who did the bio—or muckraked, depending on whether or not you're a fan— **Martha Stewart** in "Just Desserts."

Why the interest in Wintour?

Why not? You hardly know a girl who hasn't bought, or at least, read Vogue, at any time of her life. Wintour makes or unmakes designers—**Isaac Mizrahi** and **Zac Posen** among them—and fashion and beauty brands. She dictates the trends women worldwide follow.

And she has survived the infamous Vogue curse wherein the fashion bible's editor in chief is always axed after a decade or so. (**Diana Vreeland**—the legend—and **Grace Mirabella** were both fired, unglamorously.) She hasn't only survived, she has also prevailed in the Conde Nast dynasty (Vogue's publisher) where she has outlived even **Tina Brown** (who left New Yorker to edit the short-lived Talk). She rules the fashion world and, if accounts are to be believed, leaves her glamorous staff quaking in their Manolo Blahniks. (Vogue editors are expected to be in stilettos—24/7.) She is not called "dominatrix" or "editrix" for nothing. It is said that the bestseller "The Devil Wears Prada" is fiction's take on Vogue and its all-powerful editor in chief.

So is she the "devil"? The nemesis-of-icons Oppenheimer wasn't too merciless to portray Wintour as such. But, with some 200 interviewees, let's just say he certainly knew how to train his magnifying glass on the warts, zits and boils of Wintour's life. Here are the believe-it-or-not portions of Wintour's life, according to the book:

- The bob. Even non-fashionistas know Wintour has worn the bob hairstyle (full bangs and all) and dark shades (even indoors), as if forever. In fact, it really is "forever." She fell in love with this hairstyle when she was only 14 and, the book speculated, it must have been because the star writer of her dad, **Charles Wintour**, the prominent journalist and editor in chief of Evening Standard in London, sported that 'do. Standard's **Maureen Cleave** (her dad's favorite staffer) and then hot music TV host, **Cathy McGowan**, whom Wintour idolized, wore the bob. Wintour has not changed her style since.

Drop-out

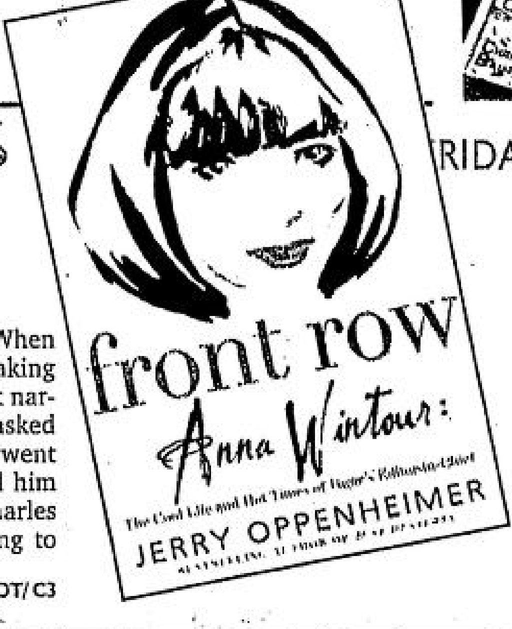
- School drop-out. This is quite a revelation. One of the era's most successful women never finished formal education. She dropped out of North London Collegiate School at 16 years old. More surprising was the cause: It is said that the school had strict uniform policy and barred its students from wearing the mini, the hottest fashion in the '60s. Wintour, a fashionista even in her preteen years, fell in love with the mini. The book gave this account: "Anna cut her gym skirt so that it was above the knee… Anyway, her French mistress lifted Anna up onto the desk and said, 'Look at this girl! She's not worthy of this great school, and she's just obsessed with clothes. She can go home!' And so Anna left North London Collegiate and never went back."

If this account is credible, Wintour chose the mini over higher education.

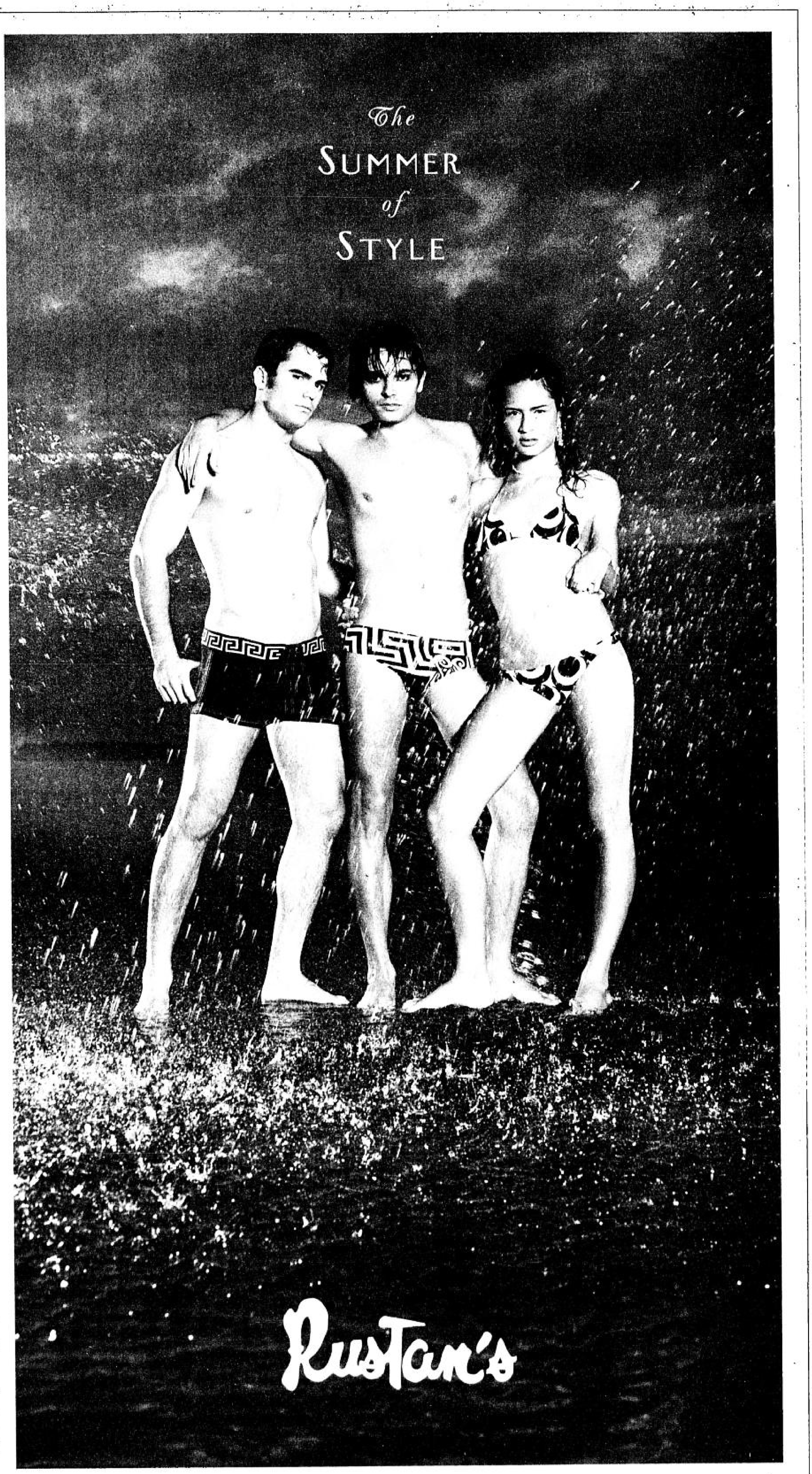
- Ice queen. Wintour's icy mien is well known, as if the phrase "stiff upper lip" was coined for her. She is Brit, born to a British father who became one of the top journalists in Britain, and to an American mother who came from a prominent and wealthy Bostonian clan. Wintour was born to wealth and prominence. Oppenheimer cites an incident that shows how stoic Charles Wintour could be, and concludes that his daughter must have inherited this trait. The Wintours' eldest was a boy, who died in a road accident at age 10 when his bike was sideswiped. Charles was then secretary to the British media tycoon, **Lord Beaverbrook**. When the accident happened, he was taking dictation from the boss. The book narrated: "… the butler came in and asked to speak to Charles… Charles went outside with the butler, who told him his little boy had been killed. Charles went back in, never said anything to

HOT/ C3

ANNA Wintour, then 37, with her dad, Charles Wintour, the powerful London newspaper editor FROM THE BOOK, "FRONT ROW"

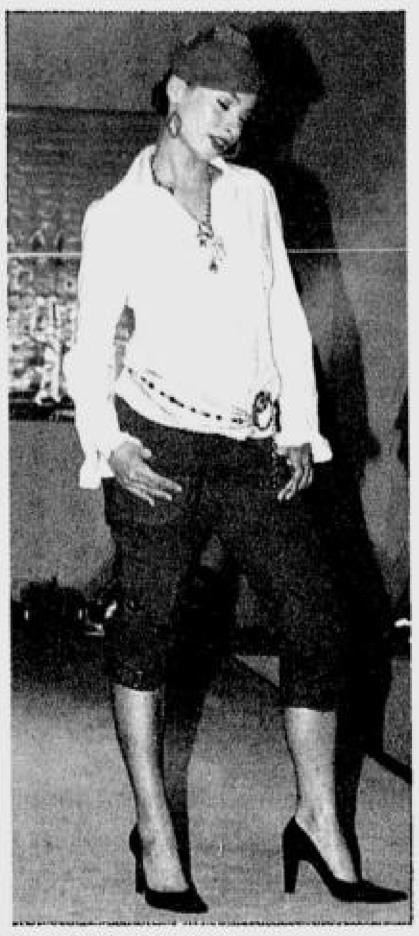

front row
Anna Wintour:
The Cool Life and Hot Times of Vogue's Editor in Chief
JERRY OPPENHEIMER

Humiliated for wearing the mini, Anna Wintour, one of the world's most influential women, dropped out of school



LAYERING with different fabrics

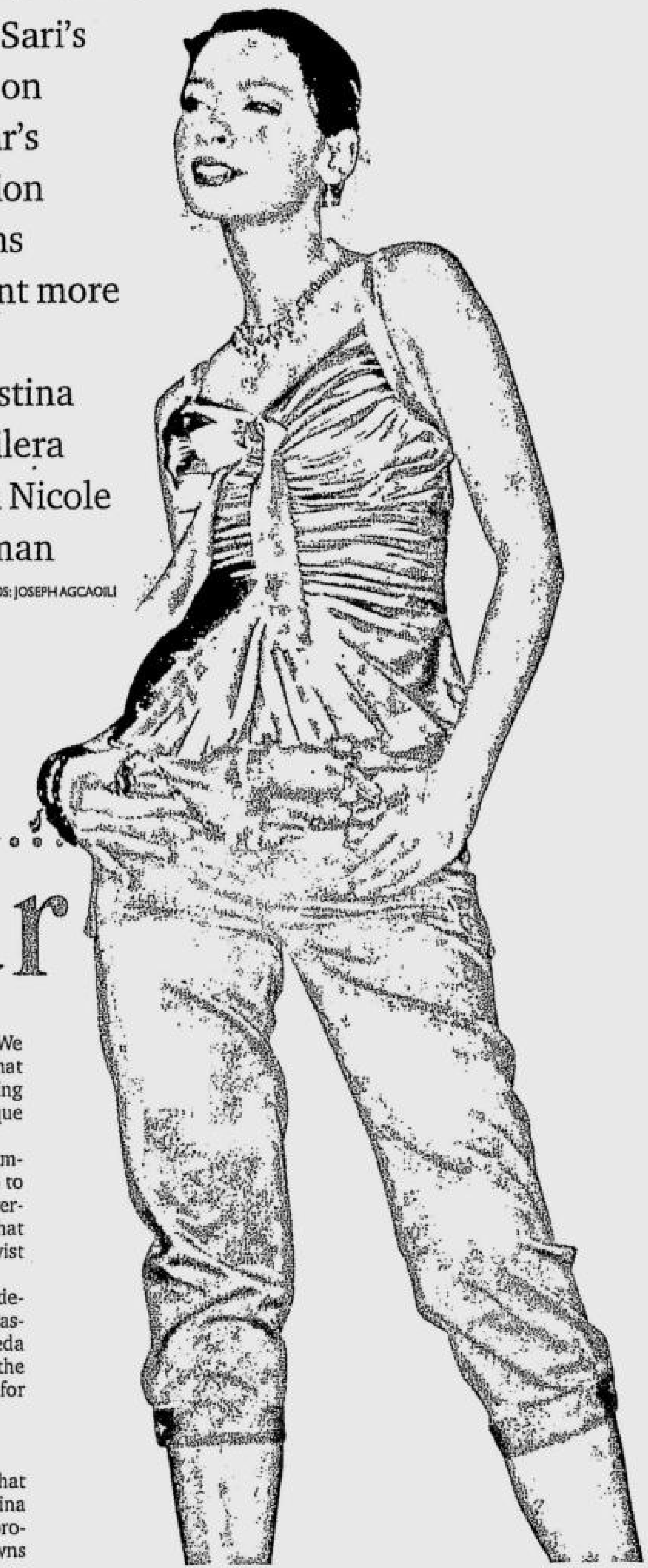
OFF-SHOULDER club wear



TIGHT and cropped

Sari-Sari's take on Oscar's fashion seems meant more for Christina Aguilera than Nicole Kidman

PHOTOS: JOSEPH AGCAOILI



MATTE and shine

And the Oscar goes to ... anti-glamour

By Alex Y. Vergara

THE OSCARS and fashion have become inseparable ever since the red-carpet event leading up to the awards show became as big as, if not bigger than, the main event itself.

RPN 9 and Solar Entertainment, the media outfits responsible for beaming the Oscars nationwide recently, drew inspiration from their exclusive show by hosting their version of a "red-carpet" affair at the Mandarin Oriental Manila.

The poolside party, complete with a giant video screen showing memorable Oscar moments and with a handful of local celebrities such as Lorna Tolentino, Richard Guttierrez and G Töngi doing the red carpet, culminated in a fashion show by Sari-Sari Store.

The clothes by Marni Ocampo and her inhouse designers, however, were anything but Oscar fashion. Not a few pieces, such as the cropped pants paired either with a sheer poncho or ruched blouse, had a Grammy feel to them. Indeed, it is unlikely for Nicole Kidman, Halle Berry or Charlize Theron to show up in loose top, frayed denim mini and fishnet stockings worn over knee-high socks on the big night. Not even at the Governor's Ball or the Vanity Fair party.

Nor will Julia Roberts, Renée Zellweger and Hilary Swank warm up to the idea of slipping into off-shoulder blouses and cuffed denim pants as they waved to fans behind the velvet rope.

But Ocampo, president of Sari-Sari Store, thinks differently.

"When you go to a formal event," she says, "you don't have to wear a typical gown. We want you to come out wearing something that reflects the real you. Apart from asserting your individuality, wearing something unique is one way to set trends."

VOLUMINOUS skirt

The bulk of their target market, says Ocampo, consists of young fashionistas aged 16 to 28. This explains the label's emphasis on versatile and relatively affordable club wear that can easily be reworked and given a new twist with the right styling.

The retail chain, which features clothes designed by Michelle Lim, Kits Lopez, April Castañeda, Siegh Domingo and Bang Pineda (who does the men's line), has been at the forefront of edgy yet wearable fashion for nearly two decades now.

Mix and match

Not that every item Sari-Sari showed that night looked like it came out of Christina Aguilera's closet. Ocampo and company produced and showcased some glamour gowns and cocktail dresses for the finale.

Still, the label's formal wear made from chiffon, jersey and various silk fabrics also had an edgy, mix-and-match quality to them. And because of Sari-Sari's "shallow" inventory, the chances of you bumping into another person wearing the same outfit is drastically lessened.

"We don't do re-labels," says Ocampo, referring to the practice of some retailers to buy cheap clothes abroad and pass them off as theirs. "One of our problems is we always get copied, so we see to it that we come up with new styles almost every week.."

Layering was quite evident in several chiffon numbers that gained amazing volume around the skirt area, thanks to visible petticoats made of layers upon layers of tulle. Slim cheongsams and shiny Oriental-inspired brocade jackets were worn over matte corsets and gowns with soft, full skirts.

The styling may be far from mainstream, but the gowns themselves were quite wearable. In fact, not a few of Sari-Sari's pieces were close to the body and celebrated the female form. That's definitely one silhouette Jennifer Lopez would have loved.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Fashion breaks the mold at Paris ready-to-wear

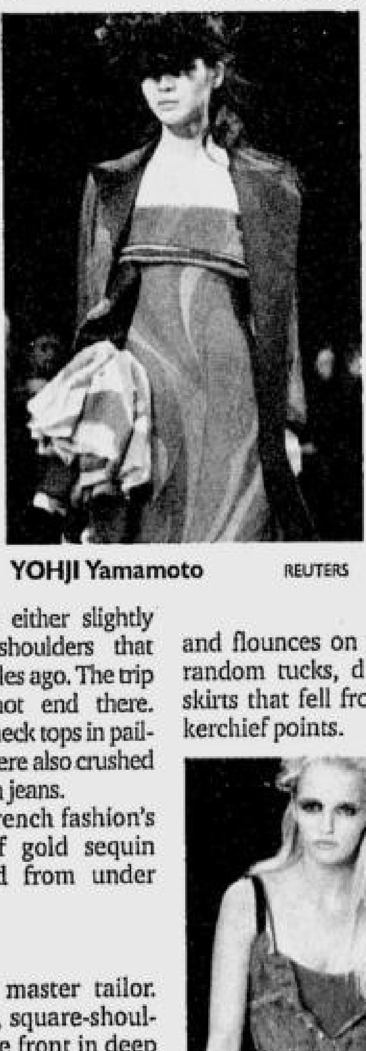
VIVIENNE Westwood AFP

YOHJI Yamamoto AFP

PARIS—Fashion is both breaking molds and harking back to the past at Paris ready-to-wear, with John Galliano leading the way for Christian Dior.

He showed simple mohair black-and-white shift dresses, aviator jackets tossed over the shoulders of striped jumpers, black wool peacoats with placed embroidered rose prints and curvy little hip-length jackets in reptile-patterned leather worn with bubble skirts or sack dresses with empire waist and lots of straps and buckles.

Really smart were short sheepskin jackets with cargo pockets on the sleeves to carry cell phones or cigarettes. There were also gold lamé jackets with nipped waists worn with green khaki aviator pants.



YOHJI Yamamoto REUTERS

Many of the jackets had either slightly puffed sleeves or broad shoulders that marked style trends two decades ago. The trip down memory lane did not end there. Loungewear included halter-neck tops in paillette-spangled satins. There were also crushed velvet jackets and copper satin jeans.

Inspired by rock stars, French fashion's bad boy sent out lots of gold sequin stretch pants that peaked from under wool officer's coats.

Glitzy

But Gaultiér is also a master tailor. Aside from impeccably cut, square-shouldered jackets that fell to the front in deep points or buttoned off to one side, he used trompe l'oeil effects to create a trench coat with a faux pleated skirt—teaming it with pewter leggings.

This season's Paris shows, which started Monday, have chiffons, cottons and organzas worn under winter coats or fur jackets. Pastels work for winter and, conversely, dark colors can carry one through the hottest summer days.

Designers are resurrecting the 1980s' broad shoulders, sweater dresses, leggings and stovepipe pants. They've borrowed tart, acid colors from the 1970s, sweet little dresses from the swinging sixties, and dash and drama from cinema icons of the 1950s and 1930s.

The house of Issey Miyake usually offers new technologies in fashion. But this season Naoki Takizawa seems to have been swept up in the wave of frilly, romantic looks.

Aside from trench and officers' coats worn with short, midcalf pants, Takizawa succumbed to ruffles and flounces on soft jersey dresses with random tucks, drapes and gathers, and skirts that fell from hip yokes into handkerchief points.

AP

MARITHE & François Girbaud AFP

JEAN-PAUL Gaultier REUTERS

JOHN Galliano for Christian Dior AFP

UST Graduate School alumni homecoming

THE ALUMNI of the University of Santo Tomas Graduate School are invited to attend its grand alumni homecoming on March 12, starting at 4 p.m., at the Tanghalang Teresita Quirino of the UST Graduate School. Alumni jubilarians and outstanding alumni will be awarded in the same event. Call Irene Evangelista at 7315396 or Dr. Nandy Pedrosa at 0918-3313641.

GOINGS ON

CONCERT. Opening the month-long focus on graduating students of the Philippine High School for the Arts in Makiling, Laguna, tonight at 6 in Paco Park Presents are pianists Miriam Dungog and Anne Barraquio. Admission is free.

PLAY. The New Voice Company production of "The Blue Room" runs on its final weekend today and tomorrow at Republic of Malate. Directed by Rabbi Gannaban, this play about Freudian subjects of projection and desire stars Jamie Wilson and Jenny Jamora. Call 8966695/5497.

WORKSHOP. A workshop on basic bead jewelry-making will be held today and on March 30 at Businessmaker Academy, 1503-A West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Building, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig. The workshop will be conducted by Jeni Padua and Justine Brilliantes. Call 6874445/4645/3416.

SHOW. Dreamscape presents XY Kidz, recipient of the Top Young Entertainer for 2004 at the 11th Asia-Pacific Awards of Excellence. They will perform on March 5 and 6, 3 p.m., at Dreamscape's Center Stage, 4/L Robinsons Galleria. Call 6362911, 6317329/7594.

CONCERT. Philippine Percussions opens Concert at the Park's Merry March 2005 on March 6, 6 p.m., at Rizal Park open-air auditorium in Rizal Park, Manila. The program features Bayang Barrios, Bo Razon & Tropikasya, AirDance, Karangahan Dancers and La Carlota City Festival Drumbeaters. Admission is free.

FESTIVAL. The 12th National Furniture, Furnishing and Fashion Festival will be held March 11 to April 3 at Greenhills Shopping Complex. Call 8268162/8203862.

SEMINAR. CFS Continental Technology is offering the following seminars: "Time Management" (March 12, 9 a.m.-12 nn); "Handling Stress and Pressure at Work" (March 12, 1-5 p.m.); "Effective Supervisory Skills" (March 17, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.); "Effective People Management" (March 19, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.) . Call 8979866, 8232358/4825.

DEADLINE. The Professional Regulation Commission is now accepting applications for registration without examination as librarians pursuant to Section 19 of R.A. No. 9246, otherwise known as "The Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003." Those who qualify under any of foregoing categories shall be given three years reckoned from the effectivity of R.A. No. 9246 (March 16, 2004) to apply for exemption and be included in the Roster of Philippine Librarians. Deadline for filing applications is on March 16, 2007. Applicants may secure and file their applications with the Application Division in the Central Office, P. Paredes Street, Sampaloc, Manila.

FAIR. Call Center Job Fair is slated on March 19-20, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., at Expo Trade Hall of Festival Supermall. Call 8253482/0804.

MODEL SEARCH. The 1st Target Model Search 2005 is a college and university-wide modeling search with 20 schools participating. The models will showcase the collections of the Philippine Academy of Fashion Designers and the winners will have a P25,000 cash, a two-year contract with Elan Models Int'l, one-year skin care maintenance from YSA Skin Care Centre and a personality and career development program from Cora Doloroso. Finals will be on March 19 at Metro Bar, West Avenue, QC. Call events@Five at 4389110, 4393447, 09224361154.

SALE. Ducks Unlimited offers a discount promo until March 31 at its shops in SM Marilao, SM Southmall, Festival Mall, Shoppesville-Greenhills, Glorietta 3-Makati, Landmark-Makati, Robinsons Ermita, Robinsons Pioneer, Robinsons Galleria, SM Pampanga and Century Park Sheraton Hotel.

THE NATIONAL Federation of Women's Clubs Foundation recently inducted its officers at Traders Hotel, Manila. Former Rep. Minerva Laudico was the inducting officer. Standing left to right: Norma Zayco, assistant secretary; Presentacion Celeste, Moleng Quinto, Virginia Manuel and Gloria Yanson, members. Seated: Concordia Pascual, second vice president; Rosario Villar, outgoing president; Minerva Laudico; Julita Benedicto, incoming president; Ester Sta. Ana, NFWC president and ex-officio member; Emma Dada, secretary; and Luz Moya Borja, treasurer

Hot book on Vogue editor

From page C1

Lord Beaverbrook, and resumed taking dictation... Charles had decided to finish his work with Beaverbrook before returning home."

The book portrays Anna Wintour as a driven, talented, foxy woman who knows how to manipulate and move people around, especially men, to reach her life-long ambition—to be editor of Vogue. More than school, it is clothes and style that meant a great deal to her. She was seeing a hair doctor, who'd analyze her hair, as early as her teens. She marked her wardrobe by the season, and was known in school to give away her outdated clothes. It helps that she inherited wealth, especially from her mother's side, to be able to feed this obsession.

She wanted to be a fashion editor and worked her way up—by meeting the right fashionistas, artists and photographers. When she finally left London journalism to be a fashion editor of New York magazine, the first thing she did in the Manhattan office was to bring in her own chic desk—a signal that the "diva" had arrived.

When she finally became editor in chief of the American Vogue—a destination that took a circuitous route within the Conde Nast empire (via British Vogue, HG)—her first cover in 1988 made it so apparent why she had an edge over the outgoing Mirabella. Her cover was a 19-year-old model in tight, faded $50 jeans and luxurious Christian Lacroix T-shirt. Haute couture had married street fashion!

That's the Anna Wintour dictum that the world has been following for the past two decades or so.

E-mail the author at thelma_ssanjuan@abs.pinoycentral.com

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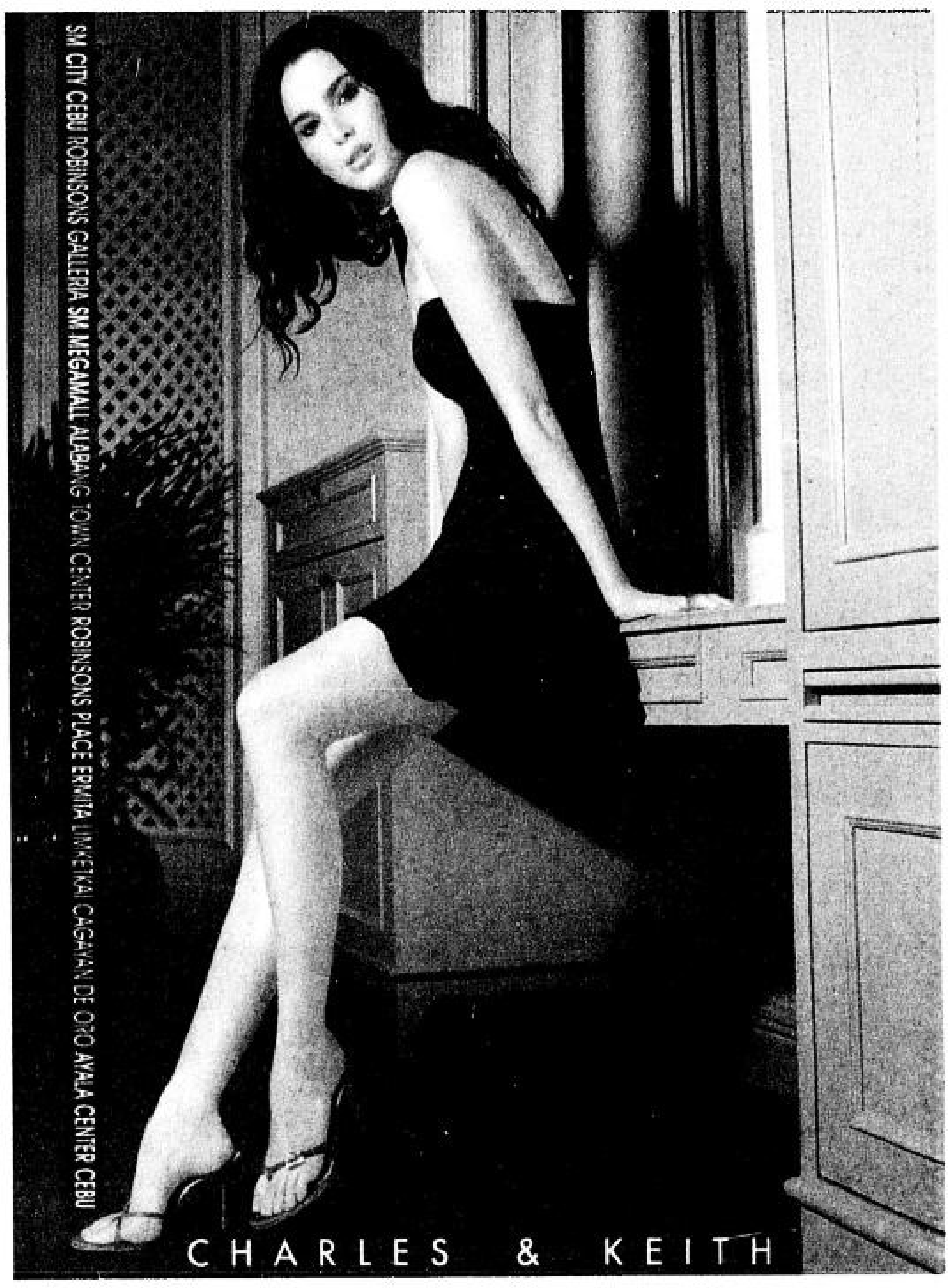
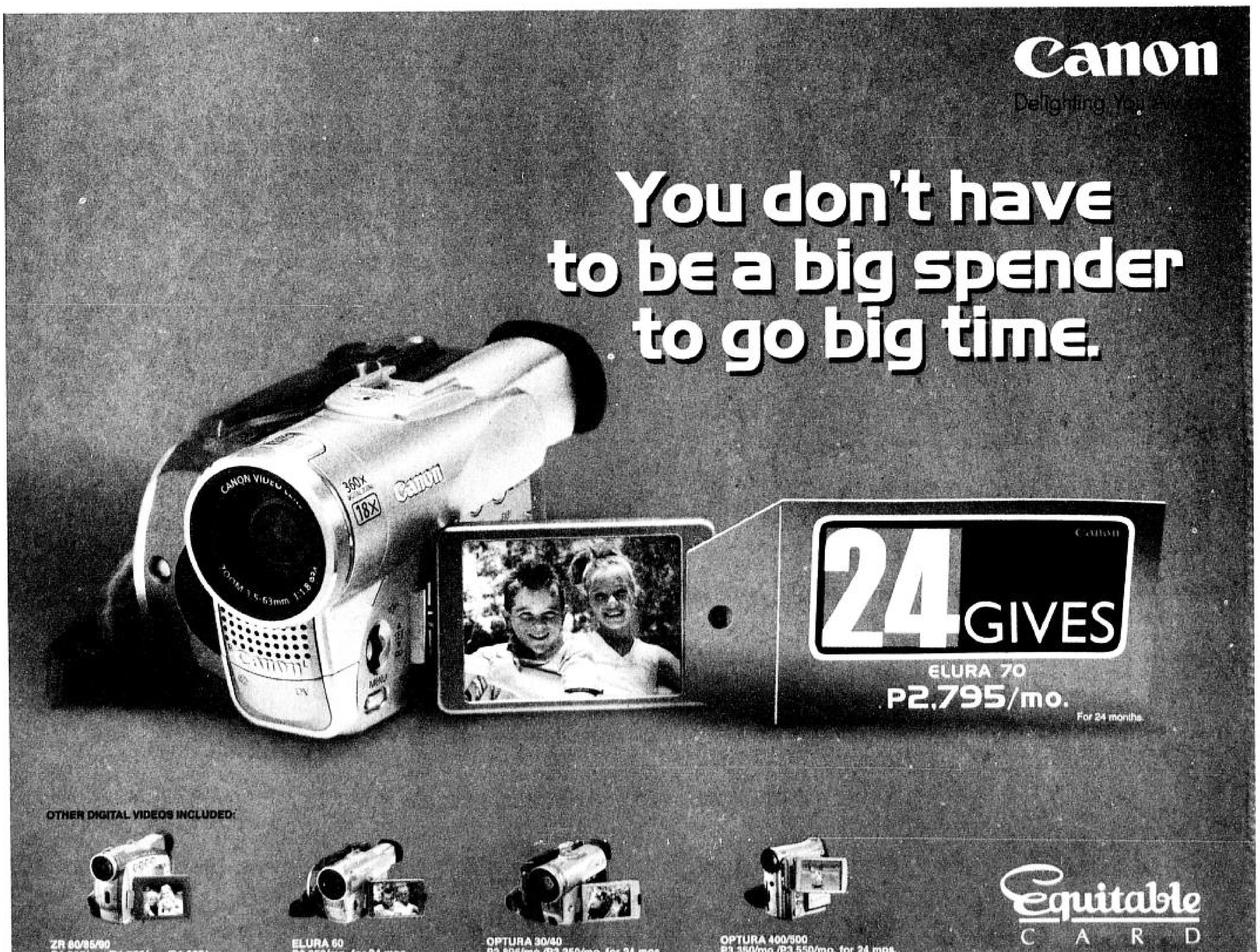


SM CITY CEBU ROBINSONS GALLERIA SM MEGAMALL ALABANG TOWN CENTER ROBINSONS PLACE ERMITA LIMKETKAI CAGAYAN DE ORO AYALA CENTER CEBU
CHARLES & KEITH



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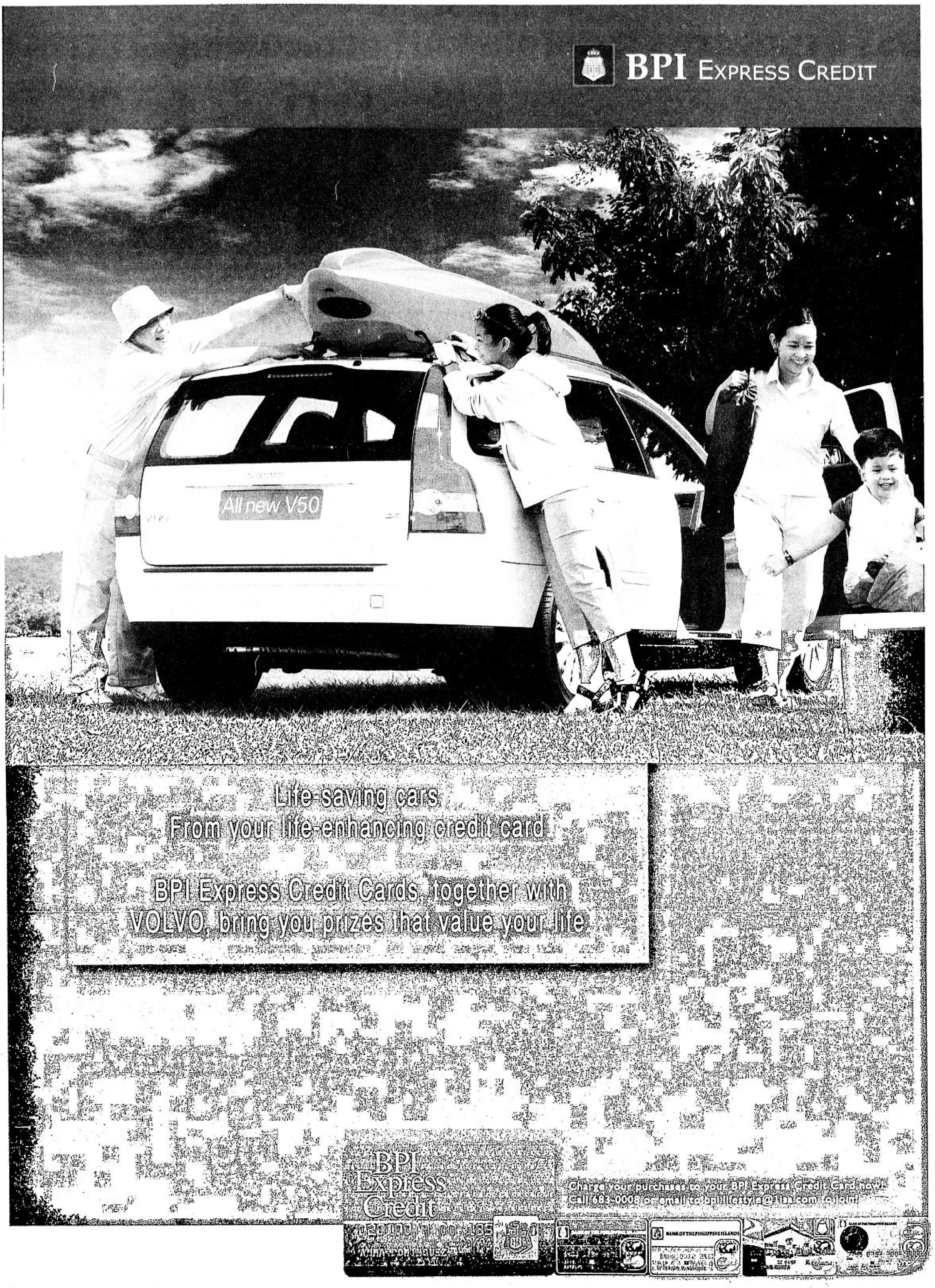
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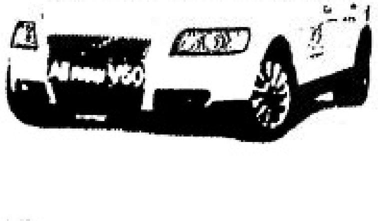

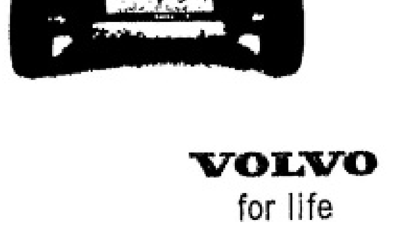

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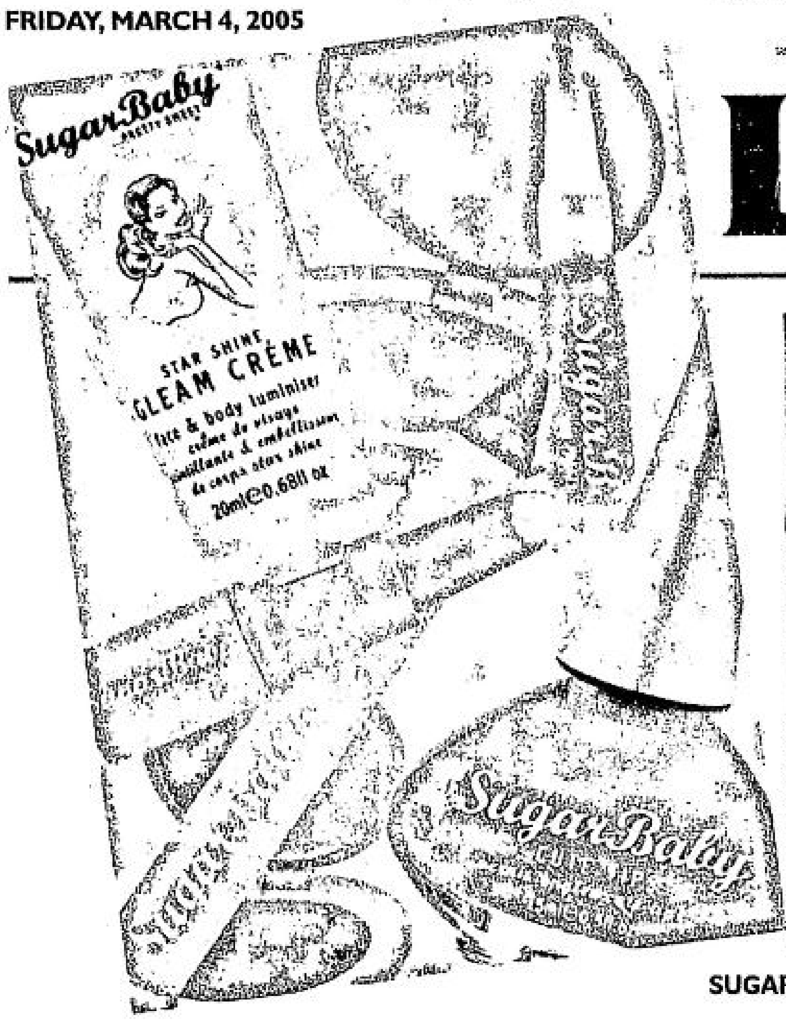

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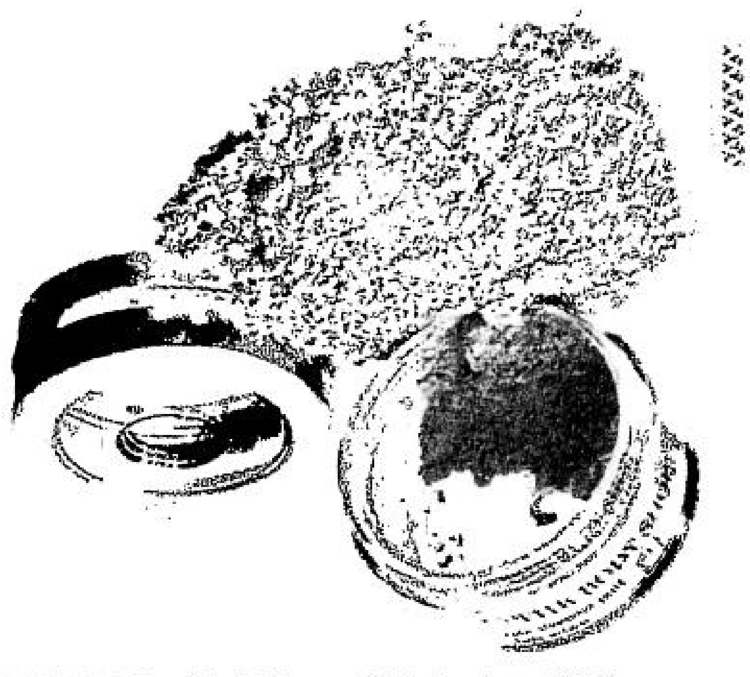


THE BODY Shop Blush Shimmer Puff in Raspberry (P550)

Makeup for the girly girl

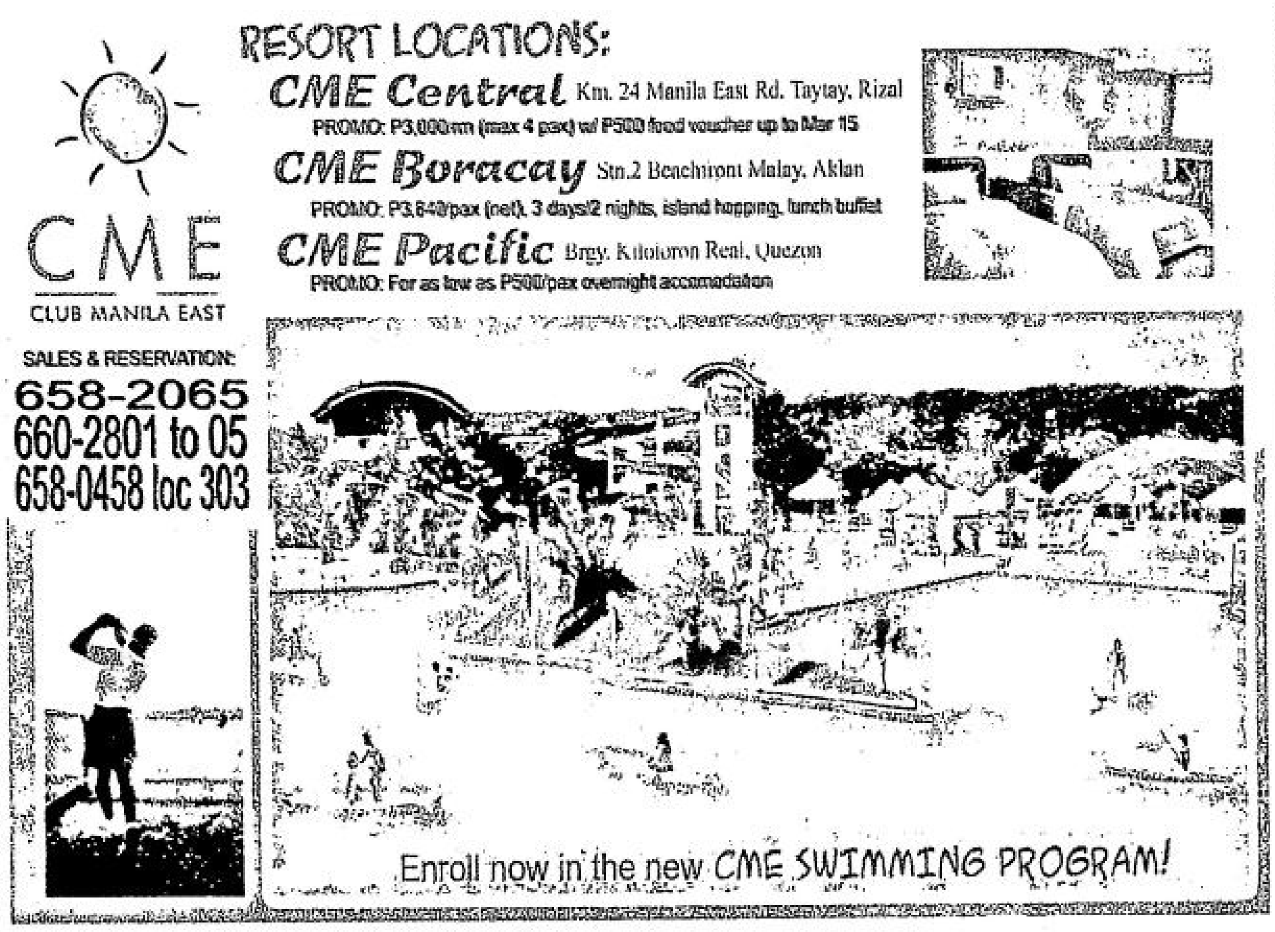
MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

THERE are three celebrities I am fascinated with, and if a makeup line makes an impact on me it's because I imagine these women using them personally. These are **Angelina Jolie** (mysterious sensuality), whom I imagined having By Terry's mercury-inspired compacts in her dresser; **Kylie Minogue** (very boudoir-sexy) and **Heather Graham** (innocent but sexy Varga girl), who is an animé character come to life like Candy Candy all grown up.

Now come two makeup lines which will appeal to those who celebrate romance and femininity with no apologies, like Hollywood girls.

MAKEUP/ D3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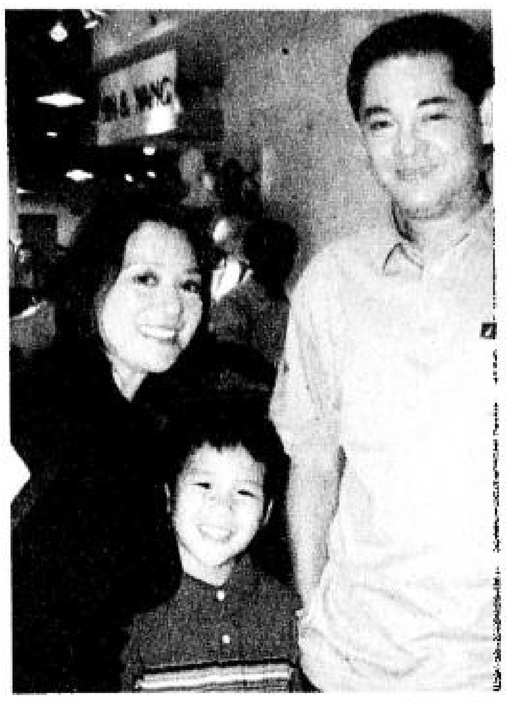
HOTSHOT guest of honor. Gorgeous Assunta de Rossi-Ledesma; Myrna Yao, Richwell owner; woman of substance Therese Santos, executive VP of Cinderella Marketing Corp.; and Janet Litton-Coronel, advertising head, Cinderella Dresses, Inc.

MARKETING and Communications director of Cinderella Marketing Corp., Malou Coronel de Venecia with gorgeous Che Singson

INVITEES include Jill Paredes of Baby Magazine with husband Allen Paredes of Equiventure Realty



DORCIE Guingona with Benjie, and CEO of Cinderella Marketing Corp. Arthur Coronel

BUSINESSMAN Nicky Santiago with wife, beauty queen, supermodel and super mom, Sara Jane Paez, and their kids Max and Sarina, who also modeled during the kiddies fashion show

Kids' day out and rocking in Rockwell

FUTURE models of tomorrow do their stuff.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THE FULFILLMENT of a dream is one of life's great rewards, *palanggas*.

The popular Cinderella's chain of fashion retail stores held a grand launch of its kid's line at its Glorietta store.

Cinderella actually started half a century ago when it began manufacturing clothes for children. It bloomed into what it is today, catering to kids, teens, ladies and men of all types and sizes.

"This is truly a dream come true for me," said Cinderella's **Therese Coronel-Santos**.

"Cinderella wouldn't be where it is today without the children, and having the kids as our prime market is really one of the pillars of our success."

Now located at the 3/F of Cinderella is a haven for children of all age groups. There, they can find everything they need, from clothes to accessories and toys.

This new corner was declared open through an explosive balloon-popping ceremony participated in by the stunningly gorgeous actress, **Assunta De Rossi-Ledesma**, and Richwell owner, brilliant lady of substance **Myrna Yao**, hot Cinderella executives were also there.

Leading the pack of hotshot invitees were California Pizza Kitchen's head honcho, **Al Santos**; GMA 7's **Lars Santiago**; and child models **Issa** and **Yassi Pressman**, **Sambrina**, **Sophia Andres**, **Skip Santos**, **Marco de Venecia**, **Gabriel** and **Wesley**.

We were treated to real cool offerings from KendiMaster, Nestlé Kimy Ice Cream and Arce Dairy; plus yummy pizzas and drinks from California Pizza Kitchen, natch.

Hip Makati place

Now on its third year, Sunlounge has proven to be a hot and hip place in Makati. Party animals have been flocking to The Power Plant Mall rooftop to see and be seen with some of our town's young hip faces, *palanggas*.

This super smashing event by the ABS-CBN Event group, headed by **Tracy Pamintuan** and **Reia de Guzman**, made a toast to the golden years with a beer fountain and free-flowing booze until the first light of the day. For good luck, gold coins were given to everyone.

The crowd was as eclectic as the music provided by **Mars Miranda**, Scramble Edge and DJ **Has**, who was fresh from Singapore, dahlings, and who spun a mix of awesome funk, disco, cool soul and electroclash.

The party vibe was on-high as a good mix of musicians, expats and artists danced like the sun would never shine again. Needless to say, *palanggas*, my pal from way back, brilliant man of all seasons, **Leo Katigbak**, was beaming with pride while taking shots of the colorful lineup of invitees "for posterity."

Right on Leo, I'm with you all the way.

Boracay blast

Famille, relatives and real close pals jetted in three planes or came aboard a gorgeous yacht to celebrate the birthday of stunningly gorgeous head-turner, **Che Singson**.

It was nonstop partying and a culinary experience for her 100 or so invitees on the island. Everyone agreed that the best food in the event was the fresh seafood lunch served at the now *tres* famous Mc Sandro Bistro. Definitely it was a culinary trip for everyone.

The gang of Che, that included vivaciously adorable **Anet Ablan**; attractive **Jean Saburit** and her beautiful daughter, **Nicole**; and happily engaged **Becky Garcia**, all super conscious of their star-waistlines, disobeyed all diet laws and dug head-on to the to-die-for crispy and lemon-crackled pepper crab, superbly prepared by tall and good-looking **Sandro Rieto**, no less, *palanggas*.

All agreed that the crabmeat was the best they had tasted, even sweeter than Manille's.

Everyone also emphasized, that Mc Sandro had the cleanest bathroom in Bora, an important factor for women, or men for that matter when eating and dining on the island.

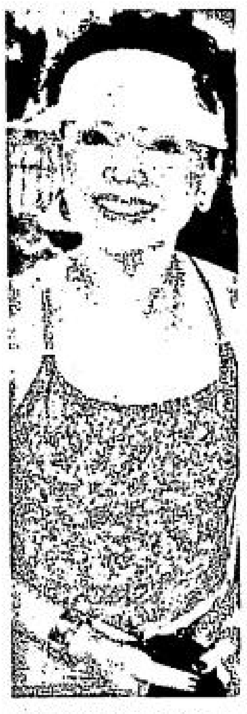
Another plus for Mc Sandro, which Anet Ablan vouches for, is that "there was no one hour of waiting for the food to be served which is a very common ordeal in other restaurants."

But Gov. **Joe** and **Vicky Zubiri**, **Al** and **Carla Tengco**, **Pepper Teehankee** and **Manny del Rosario**, swear by one dish, Pork Binagoongan.

Since *moi* don't eat meat or pork, I didn't taste the dish, but I could see in the faces of the diners how they loved the dish. *Après* all those yummies the hunch bunch agreed to walk the shoreline from one end to the other. The women went men-watching.

The tall and debonaire tycoon, **George Sarakinis**, born in Athens and raised in Germany, found all the grilled dishes delicious. He said they reminded him of his favorite home-cooked Greek food.

That evening, our beautiful queen for the day, Che, celebrated her birthday with a fabulous fireworks display, while the ever popular Manong, beamed proudly over the whole happy happening, *palanggas*.



IT'S NOT the Greek island of Mykonos but the great Boracay. Becky Garcia all set to Grecian in September.

QUEEN for a day. The gorgeous Che Singson cool in summery white

SITTING IT OUT. Businessman Ernie Gonzaga and George Sarakinis

THE BRILLIANT brains and culinary expert behind the popularity of Mc Sandro. Soulmates Mike Sandro Rieta and Louie Cruz

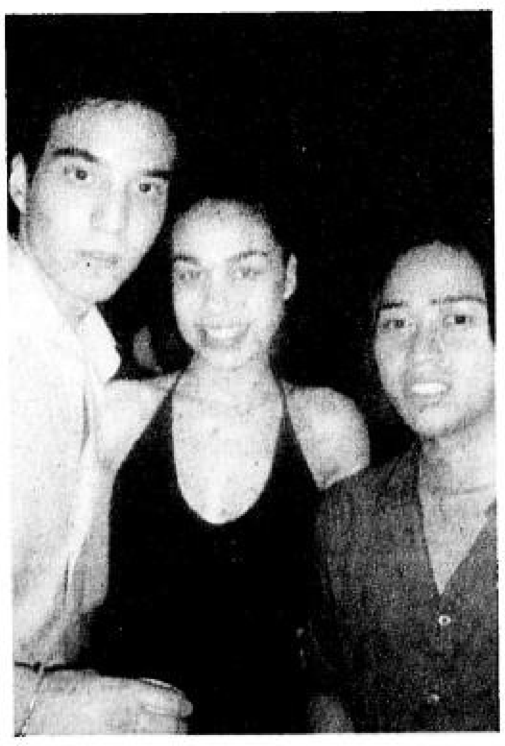
ENJOYING a day out in the sun. Leonard Chicco with Eden Fern, Eden and Dodoy Singson

WE LOVE Boracay. Jean Saburit and pal Anet Ablan

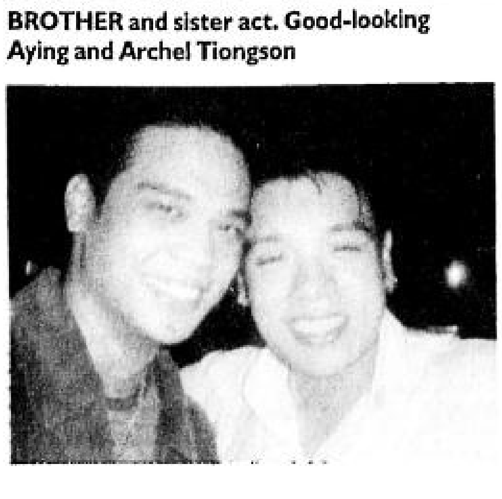
CARINA and Butch Sarfati can't say enough of Mc Sandro.

"I'M SATISFIED with the food" is the look on Jean Chua's face.

BROTHER and sister act. Good-looking Aying and Archel Tiongson



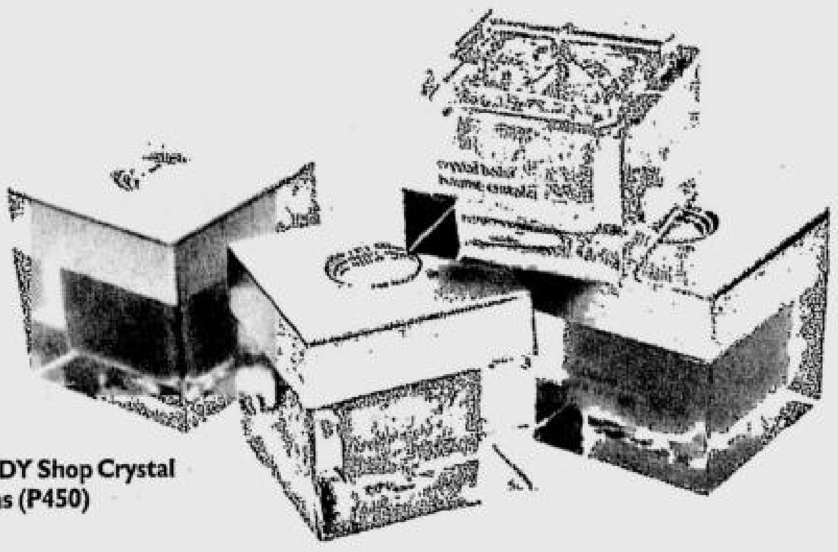
STEFANO and Sandra Seifert with Carlo Garcia



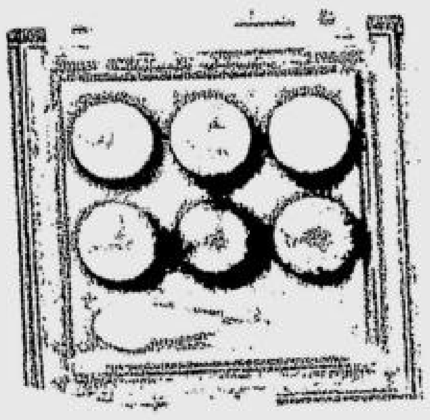
TV PERSONALITY Jeremy Marquez and movie actor Vandolf Quizon

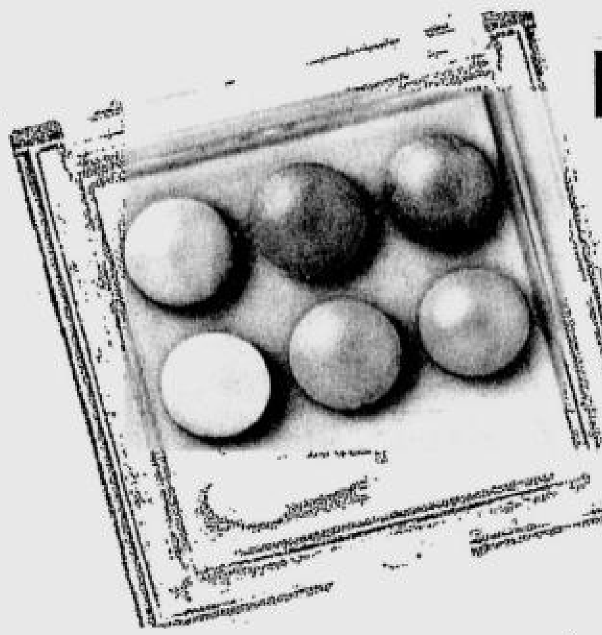
ERIKA Fife and Franz Von Muhfled

TRACY Pamintuan and Rela de Guzman



THE BODY Shop Crystal Lip Balms (P450)





THE BODY Shop Eye and Face Pearls in Pastels) 01 and Neutrals 02 (P1,195 each)

Makeup for the girly girl

From page D1

Sugar Baby

In this Australian brand, nothing costs above P995 except for the Glamour to Go Shimmer Puff at P1,050 and the large '50s beauty tote at P1,150. Aside from the nail lacquer, they all smell like candy.

This will appeal to those of you who love **Paris Hilton**, who has tons of Sugar Baby goodies and professes to like them and Aussie-born Kylie Minogue—very boudoir, bronzed, shimmery, blatantly flirtatious and oozing with sex appeal.

Think ballerinas in baby pink tutus and/or silver screen goddesses who wear (faux) fur and fluffy feather boas.

For the lips, my favorites are the Kiss n' Tell lipsticks at P695; they are so sheer that you can wear most of the shades. Particular faves are Snogging, Smooch and Peck on the Cheek. The Lip Candy glitter gloss is also priced at P695 and comes in Razzle and Super Star, Pot of Gloss in Havoc (nude beige) and Commotion (magenta rose). Fairy Gloss lip glaze comes in tastes like grape juice.

For the skin, I like Cheek a Boo Crème Blush (P945). Flush is their bestseller for that glow from within best applied on bare skin; it is suitable for dry skin types. Cheek Eye and Lip Tint (P695) in Pink Ink, and Gleam Crème Face and Body Luminizer (P995) in Moonshine, give an iridescent pink/lavender shimmer best for enhancing the décolletage, shoulders and cheek bones.

For those who want to be bronze? Sunshine gleam cream is the bestseller and Glow Baby Glow Bronzing Crème (P945) in Bahama Babe with matching Superstar shimmer bronzer (P995) are recommended.

For the eyes, highly recommended is the Ice Princess eye line and shine pencil (P695)—a godsend for those in a rush or have difficulty with eye makeup. You swipe, rub with fingers, layer and go!

Natural Born Princess (bronze beige) and Pretty Princess (blush pink) are universal. Wink n' Blink eye shimmer (P695) is a loose powder eye shadow with strong pigments. Blue Blink makes great accent as eyeliner on upper lids and Opal Blink looks wonderful when applied on top of blush. I love all six Wink n' Blinks and get all six shades if I could, but that's too indulgent.

For nails, I recommend Pink Pink and Think Pink on toes (vampy shades) and In The Pink and Pink Panther (sheers) on fingernails. Price is P495.

Spring line

The Body Shop's spring line for 2005 is themed "Get Playful."

My personal muses for the line are Heather Graham and **Liv Tyler**. There is something very fairy-tale princess, innocent and ethereal magical in the line's packaging and colors. They are packaged almost like enchanted jewelry. There are only three special products that have been launched and all are very wearable.

The Eye and Face Pearls Palette 01 (in six cream pastels) and 02 (in six cream neutrals) are at P1,195 each. In 01, I use the Pale Green and Pearl Blue for the area under the eye so as to look awake, refreshed; it also neutralizes dark under-eye shadows. The Mink, Pink and Pale Gold are the most neutral.

Palette 02 is the hands-down bestseller as it is the safer bet for *morenas* and makeup virgins. Each palette has an ideal blush color, highlighter and, of course, eye shadow shades.

Of course, my favorite is 01 to flatter my light skin and it's what I imagine Heather and Liv would choose.

The Blush Shimmer Puff in Raspberry (P550) in loose powder form that just looks so pretty on the cheeks is a runaway bestseller, and almost gone when I last checked.

Filipinas now love blush; they used to be just lip or eye people. The blush shows on any skin tone as it is very pigment-rich and the color can be used all year round, too, so I consider it a good investment. Of course, it follows that lighter skinned girls need less and darker ones need more.

Lastly, there is the Crystal Lip Balm (P450) with four very wearable lip gloss shades that may be used alone or above the lip color for a patent leather shine without being sticky.

These are selling the fastest because girls that are 13 and below can use them as they are not illegal in school. Bestsellers are 04 Iced Berry, 03 Iced Cerise, 01 Iced Pink and 02 Iced Coffee.

Sugar Baby is available at Essenses Rustan's.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas @yahoo.com

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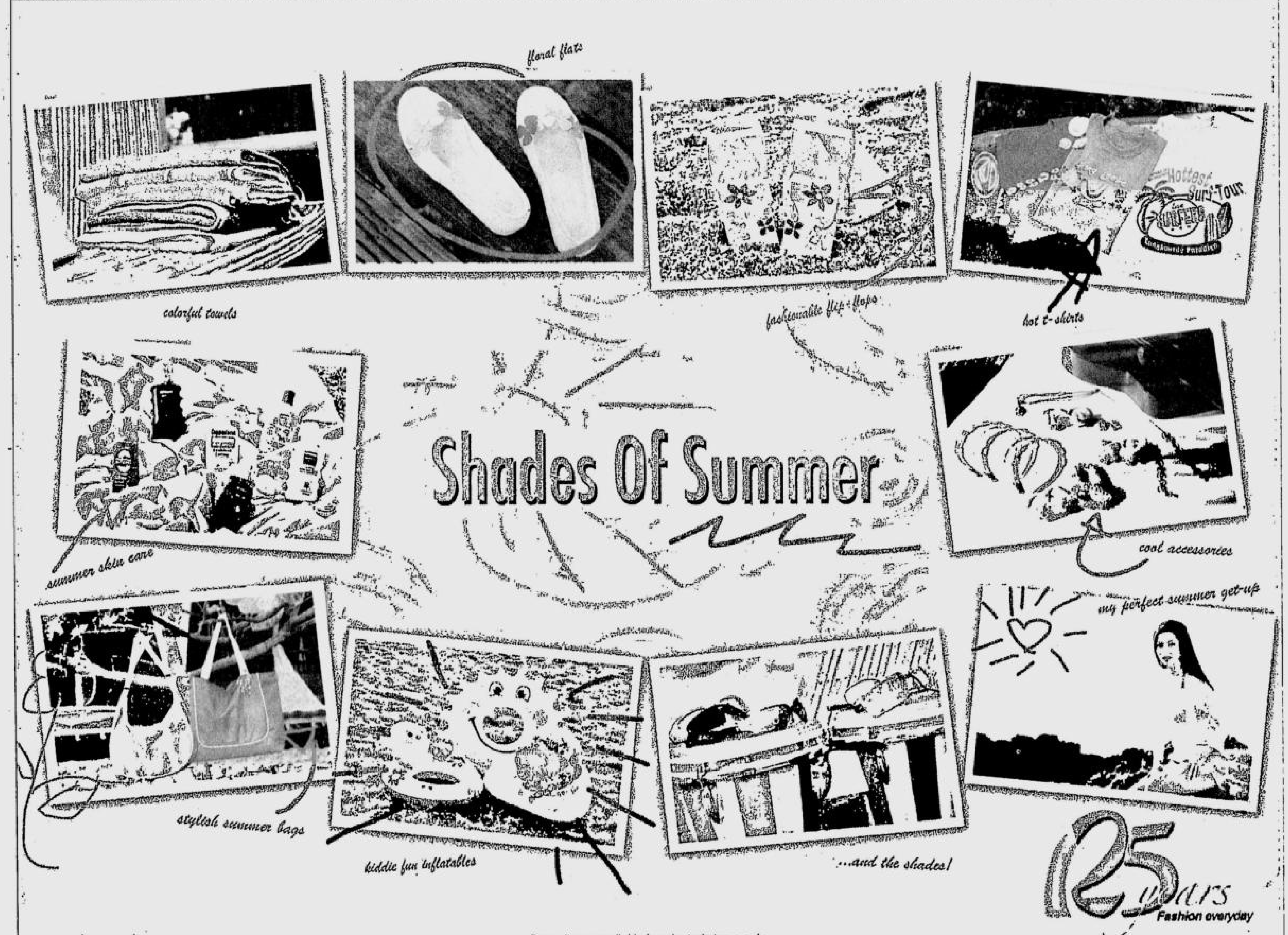

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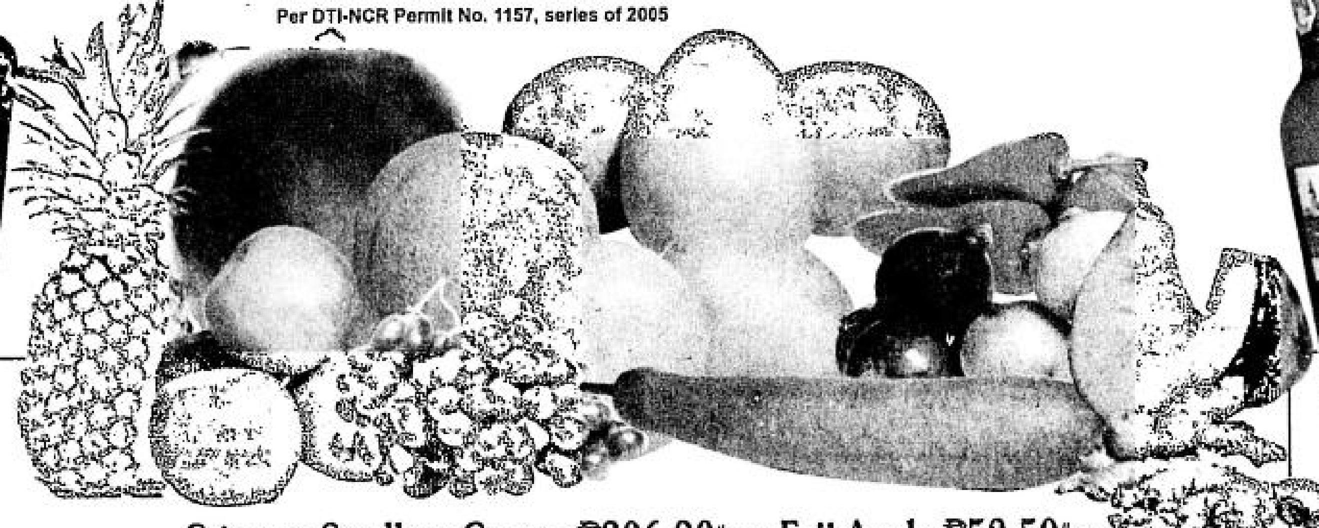
Ground Round
₱126.00/kg



Crimson Seedless Grapes ₱206.90/kg • Fuji Apple ₱52.50/kg • Davao Pomelo ₱89.25/kg • Pineapple (Formosa) ₱12.60/pc • Watermelon Sugar Baby ₱19.95/pc • Cantaloupe ₱39.90/kg • Solo Papaya ₱15.75/kg • Squash ₱ 8.95 /kg • Upo ₱10.50/pc • Native Red Onion ₱38.90/kg • Native White Onion ₱28.40/kg • Red Pepper ₱39.90/kg • Ginger ₱21.00/kg

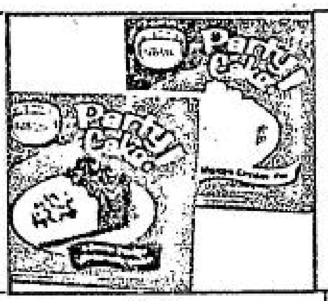
DON SIMON
DON SIMON

Don Simon
Red / White Wine
750cl ₱117.50/bot

Nestea
Lemon Iced Tea w/ Vit. C
1kg ₱106.80/pk 500g ₱58.40/pk
200g ₱23.65/pk

Purefoods
Corned Beef 210g ₱41.80/can
Chick 'N Tasty Regular
1kg ₱92.00/bag

CDO
Premium Hotdog Regular,
Premium Hotdog Jumbo 1kg ₱92.15/bag
Luncheon Meat 165g ₱19.40/can
Vienna Sausage 70g ₱11.20/can

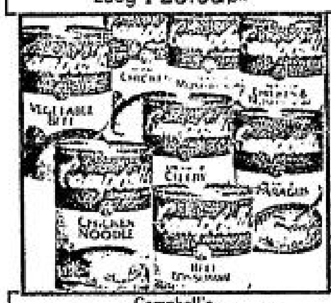


Nestle
Ice Cream Party Cake! Choco Fudge
Brownie Cake, Mango Cream Pie
1.2L ₱321.50/cont

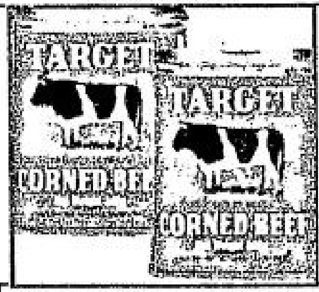
Zest-O
Rtd Orange, Grapes, Apple, Guyabano, Pineapple,
Strawberry, Iced Tea Calamansi, Green Tea Lemon,
Peach 10/200ml ₱41.75/box Soda Dalandan,
Calamansi, Pomelo 1.5L ₱25.65/bot

Del Monte
Original Blend Ketchup, Sweet Blend
Ketchup 567g ₱31.90/bot Spaghetti Pasta
1kg ₱49.40/pk Spaghetti Sauce, Sweet
Style 750ml ₱53.75/pk

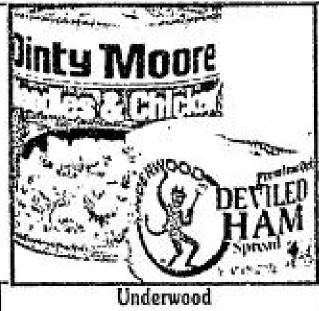
Pillsbury
One Step Cookies Mix Oatmeal Raisin,
Rich Choco Chips 167g ₱26.20/box
Choco Crinkles Chewy & Chocolatey Mix
180g ₱28.95/pk



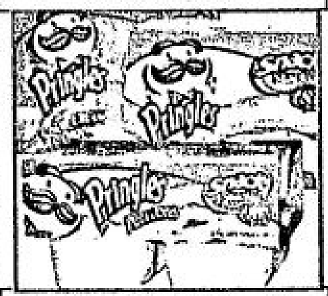
Campbell's
Soup (Australia) Cream of Chicken & Corn,
Asparagus, Mushroom, Chicken Celery,
Chicken & Mushroom 410g ₱80.75/can
Beef Consomme, Chicken Noodle, Vegetable Beef
405g ₱80.75/can



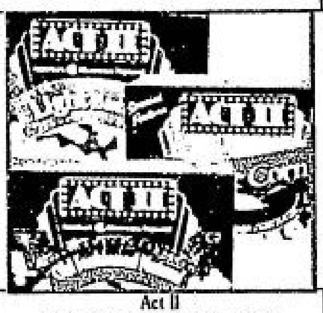
Target
Corned Beef
340g ₱54.00/can



Underwood
Deviled Ham 127.6g ₱72.50/can
Hormel
Dinty Moore Noodles & Chicken
212.6g ₱50.50/can



Pringles
Snack Pack Original, Pizza-licious,
Sour Cream & Onion, Reduced Fat
Original 8/2296.4g ₱157.95/pk

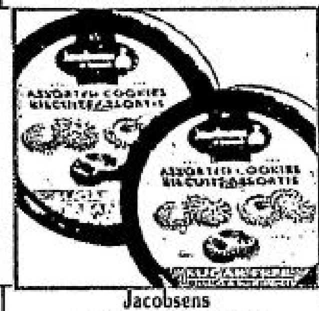


Act II
Microwave Popcorn Corn on the Cob,
Movie Theater Butter, Kettle Corn,
Light Butter, Old Fashioned Natural,
Butter, Fat Free Butter 3ct/255.2g ₱83.00/box
Double Cheese 3ct/297.7g ₱141.00/box

Shasta
Soda Drinks Strawberry, Cherry Cola,
Grape, Orange, Rootbeer, Cola Diet,
Grape Diet, Grapefruit Diet
360ml ₱15.90/can

Dahfa
Dried Fish Fillet
52g ₱34.20/pk 70g ₱44.70/pk

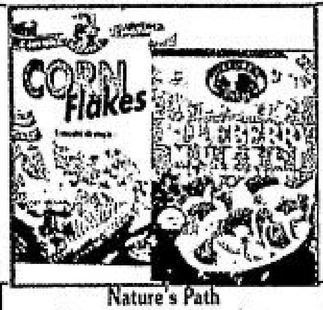
Good Life
Vermicelli 1kg ₱61.00/bag
Golden Grain
Spinach Fettuccine 283.5g ₱47.50/pk



Jacobsens
Asst. Cookies Sugar-Free
400g ₱190.50/can
Danish Butter Cookies
400g ₱120.50/can

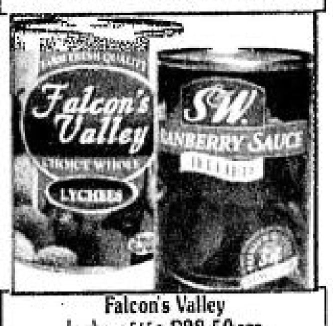
Nabisco
Fig Newtons Fat Free 59.5g ₱20.50/pk
Teddy Grahams Choco, Choco Chips
280.4g ₱102.50/box Chicken in a Biskit
226.8g ₱126.50/box

Nabisco
Oreo Choco Fudge Mint
340.2g ₱172.50/box Premium Cracker
Salted/Unsalted Fat Free
453.6g ₱100.50/box



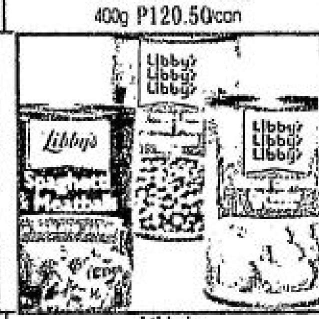
Nature's Path
Organic BlueBerry Muesli w/
Almonds & Raisins 350.1g ₱166.50/box
Nicoli
Corn Flakes 375g ₱76.50/box

Zi-Shan
Mushrooms Pieces & Stems
850g ₱43.00/can
Ayam Brand
Seafood Spread 170g ₱49.50/can



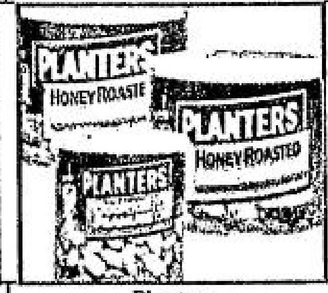
Falcon's Valley
Lychees 565g ₱28.50/can
S&W
Cranberry Sauce Jellied
453.6g ₱57.50/can

Pietro Coricelli
Ex-Virgin Olive Oil 1L ₱367.00/bot
Pure Olive Oil 1L ₱336.00/bot
Good Life
Oyster Sauce 420ml ₱69.00/bot
Sesame Oil 420ml ₱106.50/bot

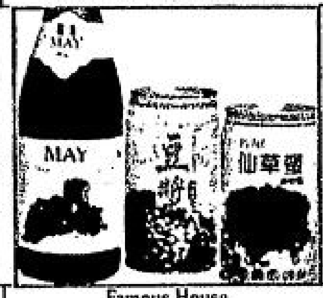


Libby's
Sweet Peas, Sliced Carrots
426g ₱36.50/can
Spaghetti w/ Meatballs
425.3g ₱65.50/can

Nesquik
Strawberry 425.3g ₱120.50/can
850.5g ₱181.50/can
Nestle
Toll House Brownie 56.7g ₱20.50/pk



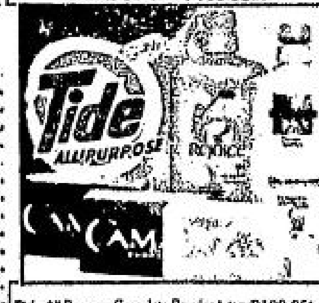
Planters
Cocktail Peanuts 184.3g ₱72.75/can
Honey Roasted Mixed Nuts
340.2g ₱191.90/can



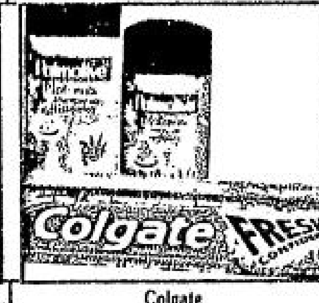
Famous House
Soya Bean Drink, Grass Jelly Drink
350g ₱20.50/can
May
Sparkling Juice Red 750ml ₱110.50/bot

Jolly
Maraschino Cherries w/ Stem
737.1g ₱205.00/bot
Water Chestnut 567g ₱27.00/can

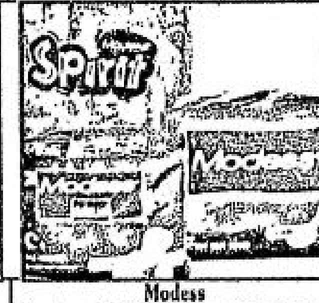
Skippy
Peanut Butter Squeez It Tube 255.2g ₱117.50/tube
Log Cabin
Syrup Lite, Regular 7[illegible] ₱175.50/bot
Regular 360ml ₱110.50/bot
Regular [illegible] ₱232.50/bot



Tide All Purpose Complete Powder 1.4kg ₱180.95/bag
Camay HBCL Bar Romantic Red,
Elegant Black, Tender White 125g ₱23.15/bar
Rejoice Rich Shampoo 750ml ₱246.85/bot
Pantene Shampoo Smooth & Silky 750ml ₱300.20/bot



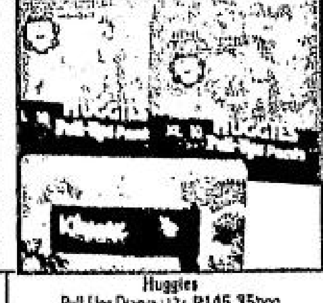
Colgate
Fresh + Whitening 150ml ₱61.75/tube
Palmolive
Naturals Detangling Normal 200ml ₱65.95/bot
100ml ₱35.65/bot



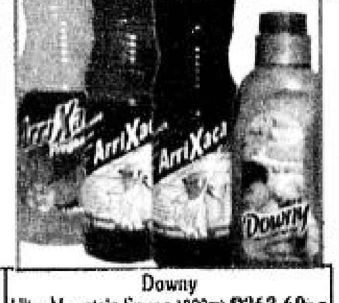
Modess
Maxi Long C. Soft No Wings Odor Control
8's ₱32.00/pk Spirit Cottony Soft Singles
Odor Control 12's ₱41.50/pk All Night
Maxi Wings 4's ₱27.10/pk

Astring-O-sol
Freshmint/Gold 60ml ₱43.95/bot
120ml ₱74.65/bot Ice 60ml ₱37.30/bot
120ml ₱62.80/bot Specialist 60ml ₱58.60/bot
120ml ₱93.15/bot

Vernel
Fabric Softener Floral Fresh, Jasmine,
Tender Touch 4L ₱276.80/jug
2L ₱164.80/jug



Huggies
Pull-Ups Diaper L12's ₱145.35/bag
XL10's ₱134.50/bag XXL8's ₱123.80/bag
Kleenex
Aroma Theraphy Facial Tissue
3ply/80pulls ₱41.85/box



Downy
Ultra Mountain Spring 1800ml ₱363.60/jug
ArriXaca
Floor Cleaner Floral, Marine, Citrus
1L ₱73.30/bot

COOL shift to summer /E3

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Reworking your basic blue jeans

More than adornments, deconstruction is key in creating a stylized, unique pair

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

NOWADAYS, individual style is encouraged and lauded more than ever. Expressing yourself through your manner of dressing and choice of clothing is exciting and, to put it simply, quite fun.

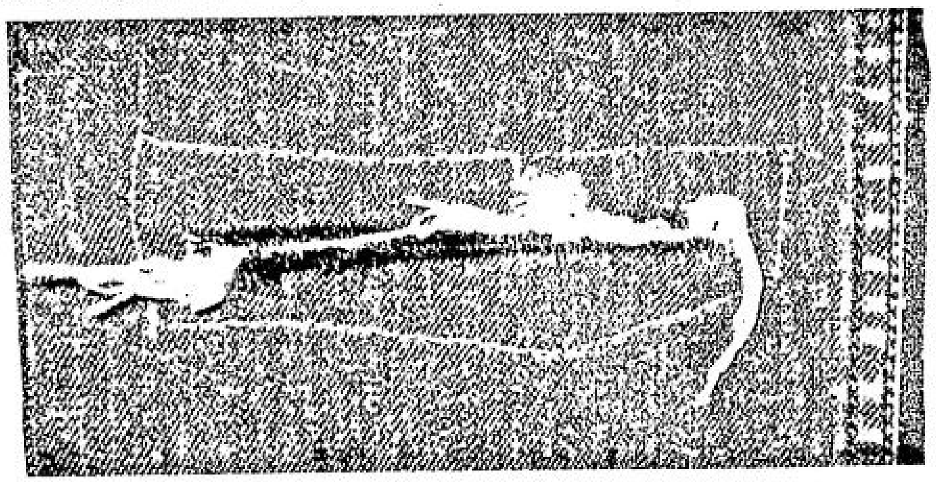
One way to do this and stand out in a crowd is by stylizing your basic blue jeans.

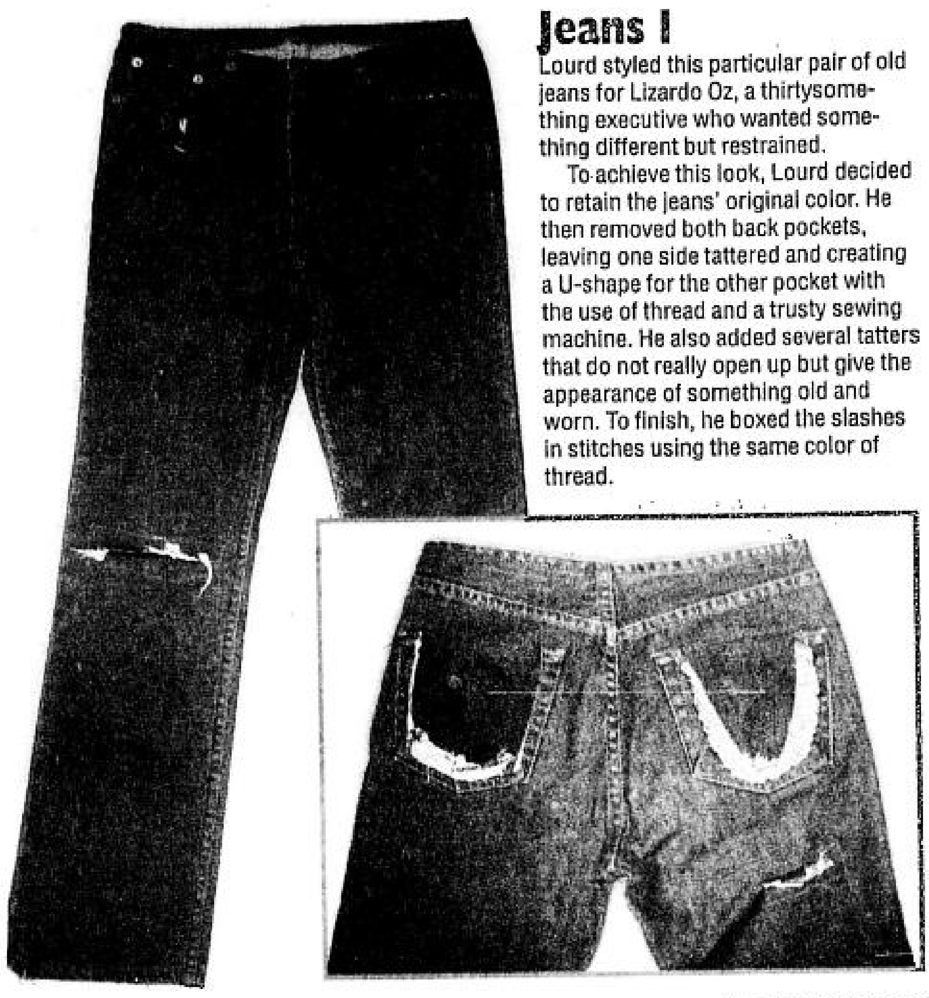
Remember the "Jazz up your Levi's" promo back in the early '90s? It was a nationwide competition where participants had to embellish their denim jeans as creatively as possible.

REWORKING/ E2

Tools you need

- A sharp blade
- An old toothbrush or shoe brush
- Zonrox bleach
- Fabric softener
- Masking tape
- Thread
- Sewing machine
- *Retaso* (old pieces of fabric) from old jeans

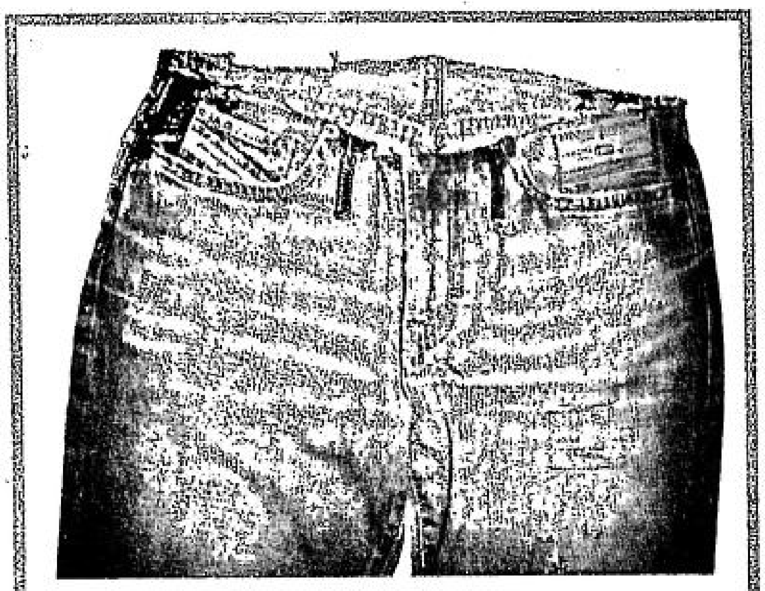


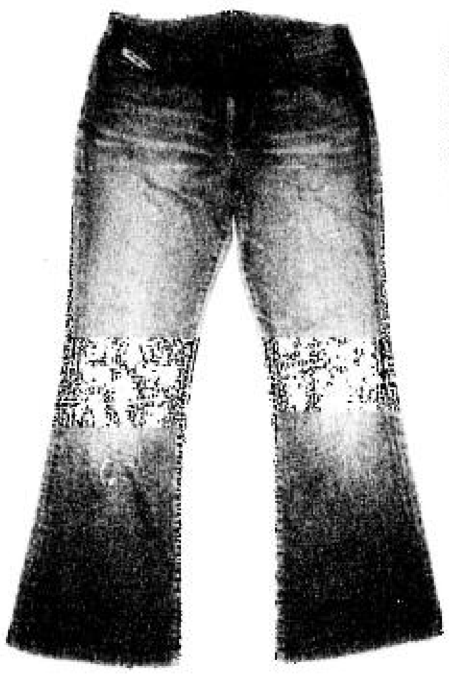


Jeans I

Lourd styled this particular pair of old jeans for Lizardo Oz, a thirtysomething executive who wanted something different but restrained.

To achieve this look, Lourd decided to retain the jeans' original color. He then removed both back pockets, leaving one side tattered and creating a U-shape for the other pocket with the use of thread and a trusty sewing machine. He also added several tatters that do not really open up but give the appearance of something old and worn. To finish, he boxed the slashes in stitches using the same color of thread.

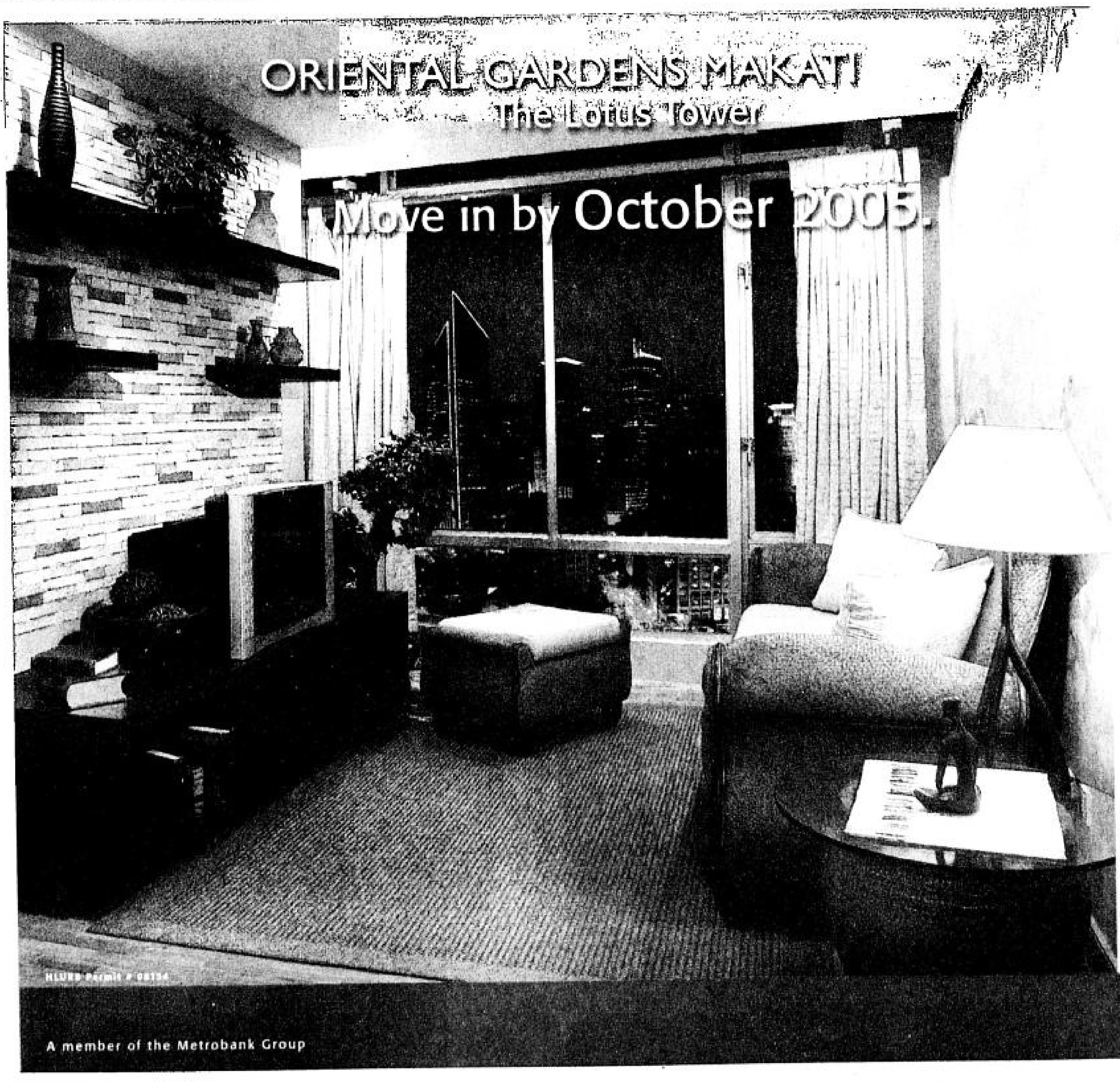




Jeans 2

Lourd deconstructed this old pair of Diesel jeans by brushing on some bleach in particular areas he wanted to lighten. Note that he did not soak the pair so as to achieve varying tones and finishes.

He cut off the waistband completely. Next, he took the belt loops and reattached them. He sliced the knees and several other sections and boxed the slices in stitches. To finish, he brushed and bladed certain areas to create tatters.



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It's a good Friday.

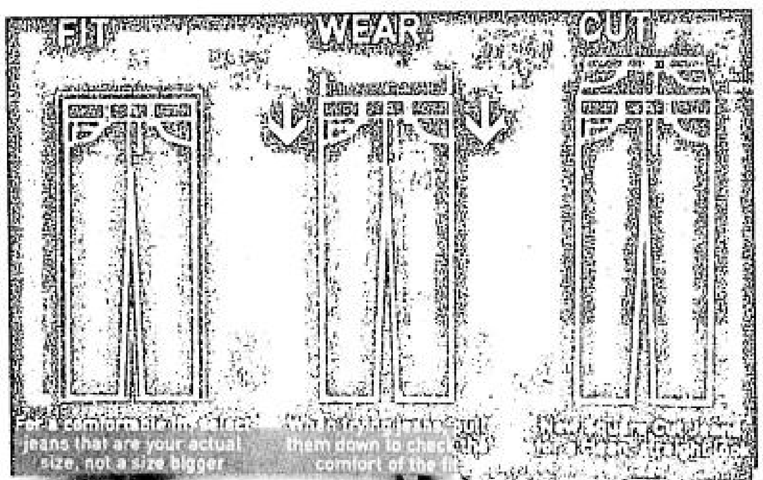
Enjoy a Filet-O-Fish throughout Lent.

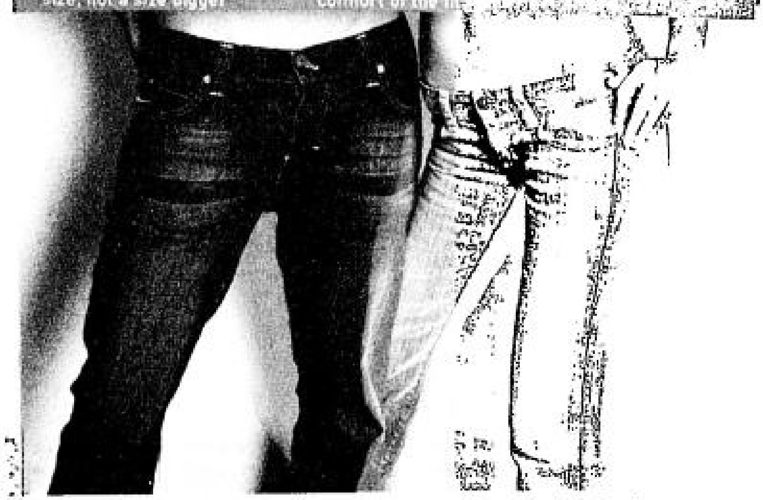
love ko 'to

LEVI'S Square Cut jeans style statement puts attitude at the forefront—relaxed and fuss-free style that is definitely no-nonsense.

HIGHLIGHTING a cutting-edge and spunky statement that springs from his youthful spirit of individuality

LEVI'S goes hip and happening!


FIT
WEAR
CUT
jeans that are your actual size, not a size bigger
them down to check comfort of the fit



EXUDING playful confidence and down-to-earth chic in the spring/summer collection

Hip to be square

LEVI'S new Square Cut jeans for guys and girls is sure to redefine the boxy impression on that four-cornered form.

Her pair is more form-fitting and flattering than expected. The European lightweight broken twill fabric allows movement and fall, revealing that curvaceous bod. A low-rise fit with a wider waistband and thicker belt loops help conceal annoying flabs, while the forward side seam and rigid cuts add to the slimming illusion as well.

Pockets are likewise modified. The coin pocket is slightly curved and positioned higher, and back pockets are made purposely smaller. Front pockets, on the other hand, are made shallower, allowing for a less bulky, more flattering silhouette.

Three fits are customized for various body types: skinny, straight and tight boot cut. All are applied in stretch and non-stretch fabrics. Varying hues and finishes provide for a fresh flexibility to this fashion must-have.

For guys, Levi's Square Cut jeans is not only more stylish but guarantees a very comfortable fit as well.

The same wider waist band and thicker belt loops are applied.. The lightweight broken twill fabric, top stitching and no-hip cut give a more casual yet distinctive statement.

Modifications in pocket design are apparent, with a wider assortment of darker finishes in two fits, slim and regular.

Levi's spunky new collection puts attitude at the forefront, from the casually relaxed Levi's N3BP line and glamorous Levi's Lady Style range, jackets, tops and skirts.

The blend of pretty, feminine details with avant-garde designs are strong yet refreshing, while the utilitarian facets in the men's jeans are combined with inventive construction for a rebellious look.

Levi's N3BP, Lady Style and Square Cut jeans will be in stores this month..

Reworking your basic blue jeans

From page E1

Participants went wild with their designs. Beads, sequins, embroidery and whatnot were used without compunction, thereby creating unique, personalized looks.

Although embellished denims are still in, designs are subtler and more streamlined (if it suits your personality, of course) these days. In fact, more than adornments, deconstruction is key in creating a stylized pair of jeans.

But it's not easy to find something distinctive in the local stores and boutiques, so a bit of creativity will help. Fortunately, I chanced upon Emphasis Salon's talented stylist Lourd Ramos, who was then wearing a pair of deconstructed, slashed, vintage-looking denims.

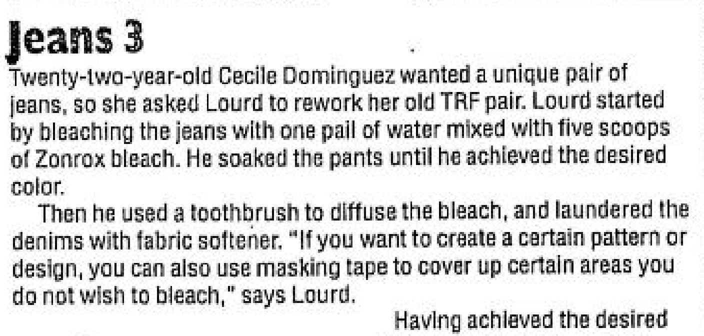
Always in search of fashionable pieces, I asked him where he got his up-to-the-minute denims and it turned out it was an old ratty pair he had reworked.

I took the opportunity to ask him to share with us how he goes about designing/deconstructing his jeans and what he does to achieve a certain look or finish.

Here are some pieces which he reworked for himself and some clients and friends, and how he made them.

Want to have your old jeans re-styled? Call Lourd at 0918-9356038 .

E-mail the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com

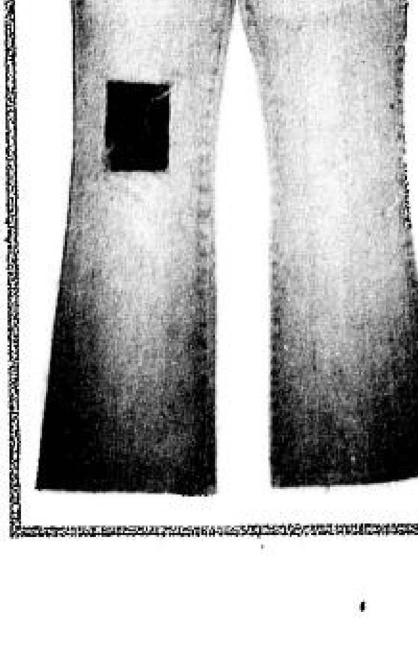


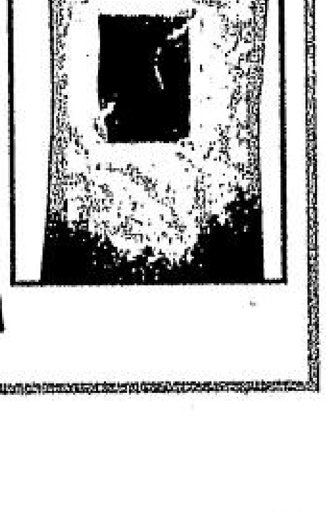
Jeans 3

Twenty-two-year-old Cecile Dominguez wanted a unique pair of jeans, so she asked Lourd to rework her old TRF pair. Lourd started by bleaching the jeans with one pail of water mixed with five scoops of Zonrox bleach. He soaked the pants until he achieved the desired color.

Then he used a toothbrush to diffuse the bleach, and laundered the denims with fabric softener. "If you want to create a certain pattern or design, you can also use masking tape to cover up certain areas you do not wish to bleach," says Lourd.

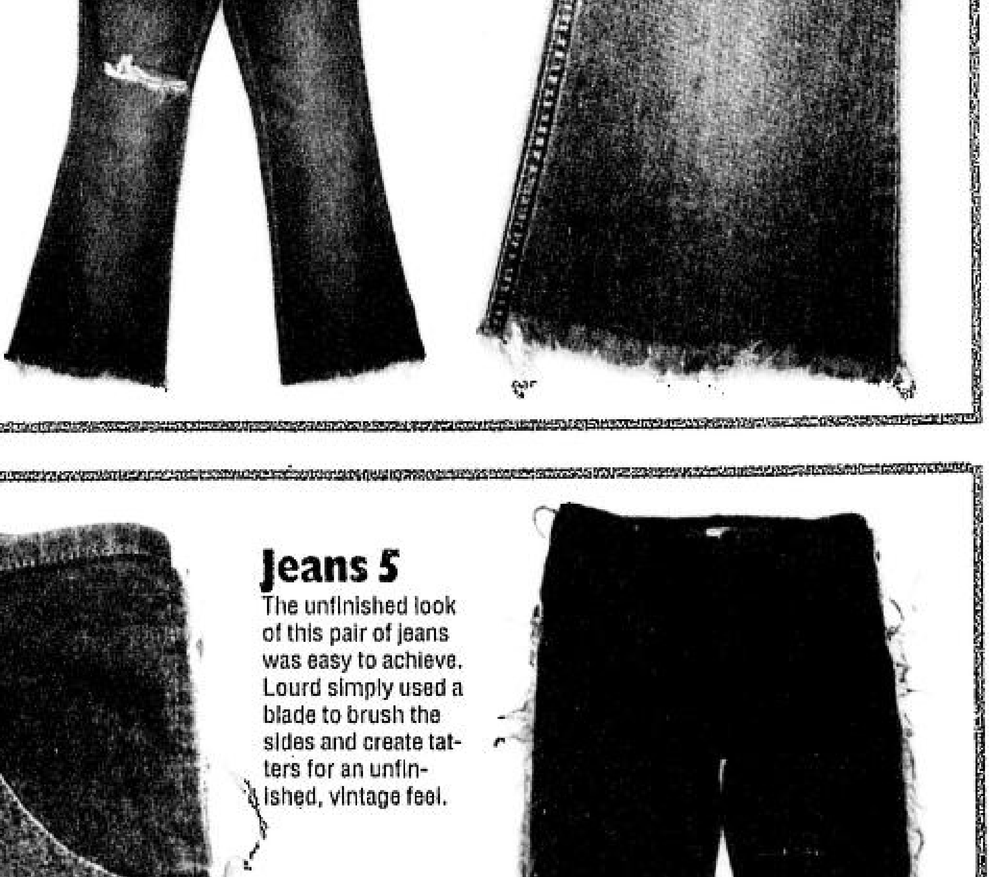
Having achieved the desired finish, Lourd removed both back pockets and the small, secret pocket in front. Then he cut off the tag and sewed it on the back, just below the waistband. He also created dark patches in the knee area and the back with the use of old dark denim material.

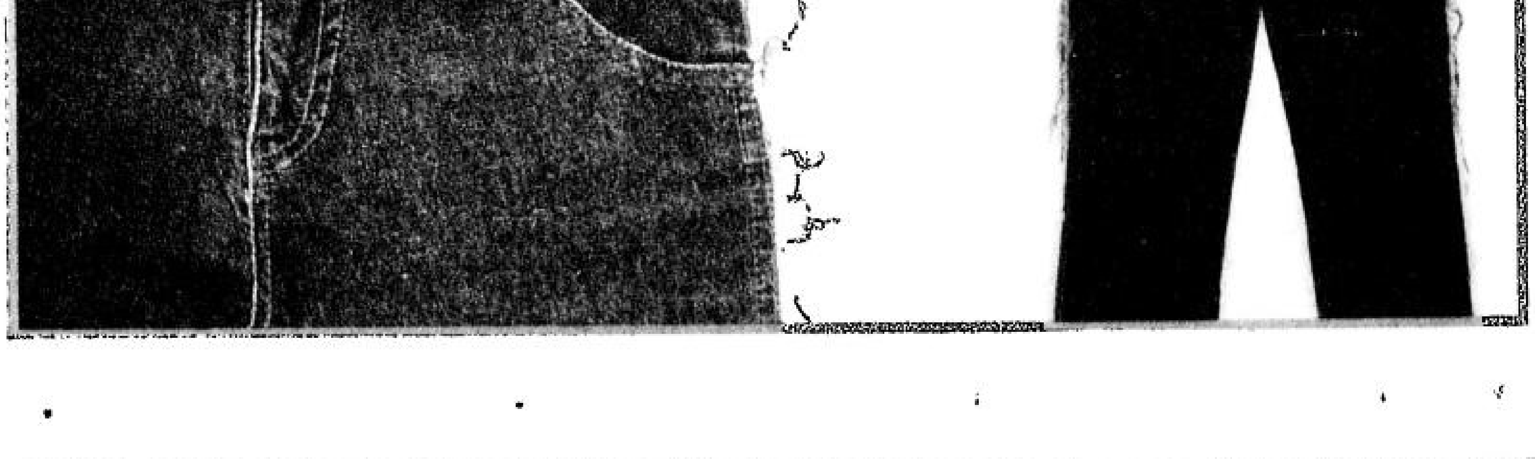




Jeans 4

Lourd restyled this pair of *ukay-ukay*-bought jeans for himself. Again, he brushed on bleach in desired areas, then washed the pair with fabric softener. He created a wide slash on the knees using a blade. He also cut off the bottom and distressed the hems by pulling off the threads, and brushed specific spots with a blade in other areas.

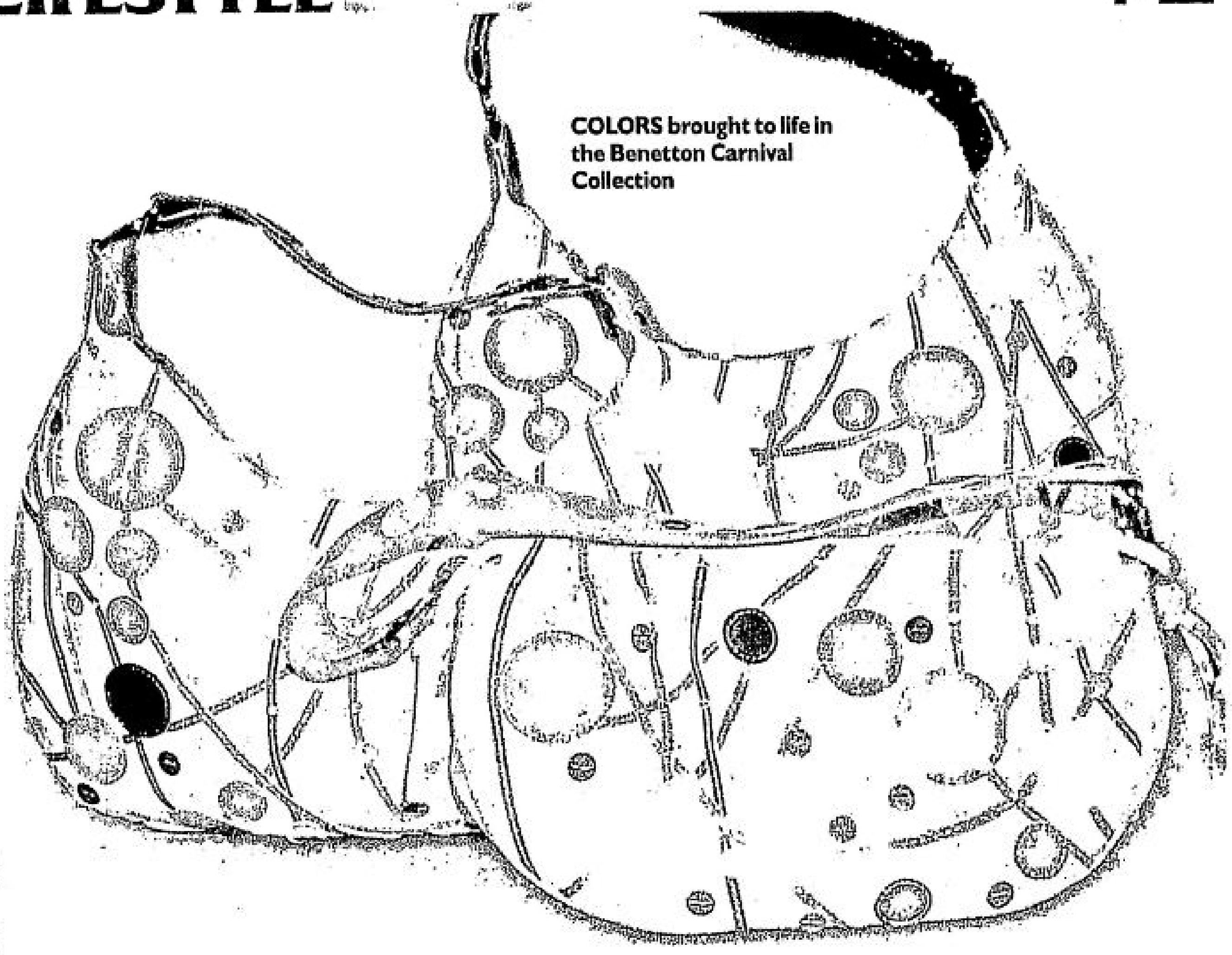




Jeans 5

The unfinished look of this pair of jeans was easy to achieve. Lourd simply used a blade to brush the sides and create tatters for an unfinished, vintage feel.

SEGUE Hot Summer postman bag, cap and pouch. Also available in yellow, apple-green and red



COLORS brought to life in the Benetton Carnival Collection

Segue cooly into summer

By Shirley Oh
Contributor

NOTHING heralds the arrival of summer better than the sudden profusion of hot tropical colors. Lime green, aqua blue, sunny yellow and salsa red are back in their rightful places—front and center—for the season, and heaven help those who try to resist their call.

The latest collection of Segue bags is a sweet siren for some summer fun, especially with bags named Carnival, Fling and, well, Hot Summer.

Carnival, a line of faux leather hobo bags in basic black and white, brings us back our carefree childhood days with its brightly colored patches, reminiscent of dropped ice cream scoops and bright confetti littering the streets after a day of fiesta.

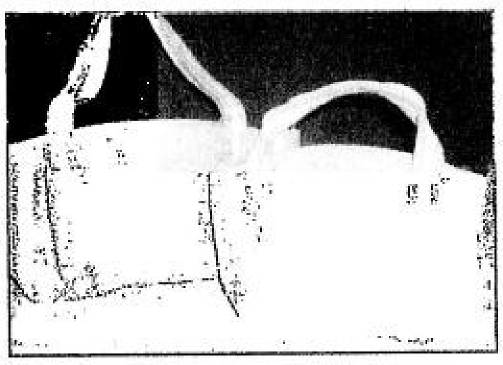
Those who dream of jetting to St. Tropez for a little getaway but can only afford Puerto Galera can take comfort in the Twinky and Fling collection, whose hot colors and durable material—nylon and cotton twill, respectively—can get you to the beach in style.

If preppy is your luggage style of choice but you still want to be a bit more daring and fun than usual, Chelsea and Subway are for you.

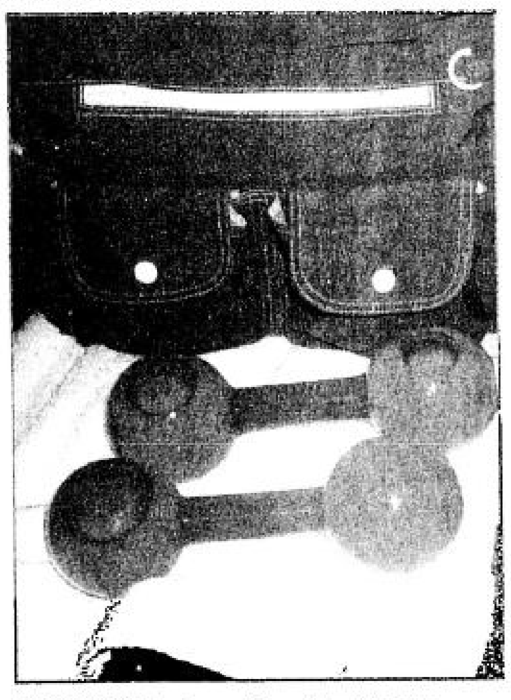
The Chelsea collection of backpacks and totes are sure to stand the test of sand and seawater with its polyester tactel material, and they can also stand the test of style in shades grass, sky blue and sand. Subway is a luggage line for the heavy jetsetter set, complete with 20" and 25" wheeled bags and even a 15" wheeled beauty case. And these bags will be definitely hard to lose and hard to miss in the airport, with their distinctive green, red and yellow colors.

Finally, for those who like to be over the top, the Hot Summer line of cotton twill bags is a good choice. In red, apple green, yellow and turquoise, you're sure to generate heat and state the obvious with these bags in their colorful floral designs and Hot Summer! statement.

Fling, Subway and Hot Summer are available at Segue Glorietta 2 and Segue Megamall A. Carnival, Twinky and Chelsea are available at all Gift Gate and Segue stores.

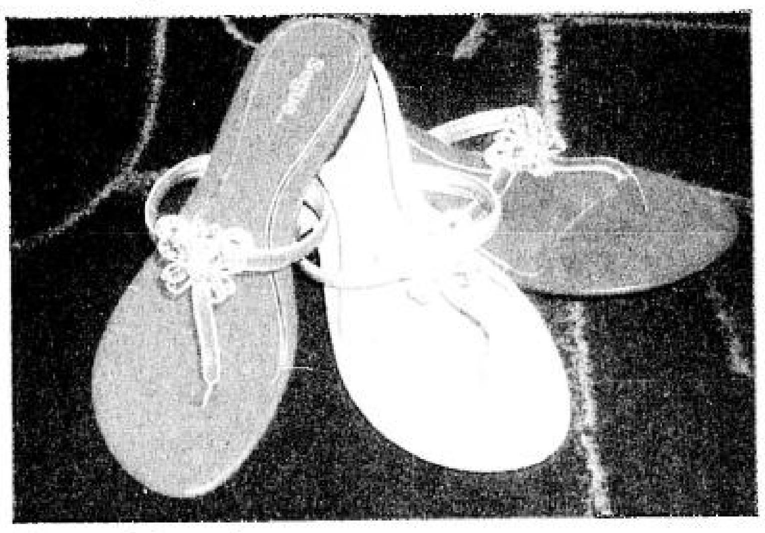


SLING your arms into the Fling Collection of cotton canvas bags in black or apple-green.

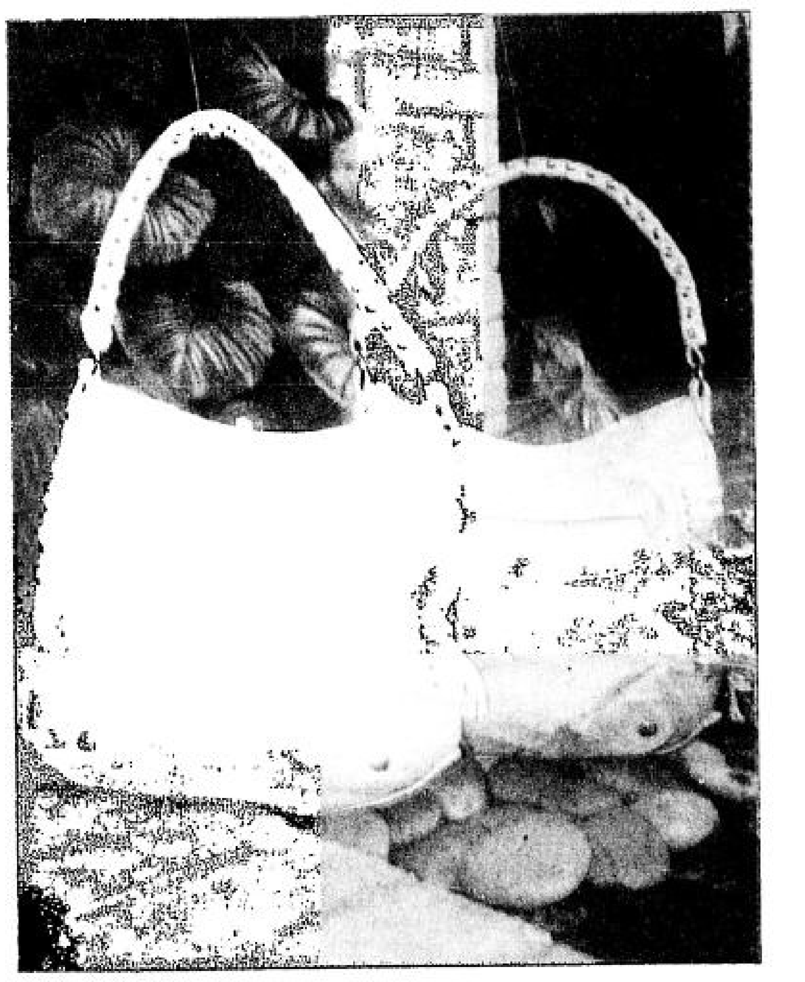


ENERGETIC colors of Benetton Twinky Collection have the vibes of a sunny summer day. Available in backpacks, shoulder and sling bags in various sizes and cosmetic pouches

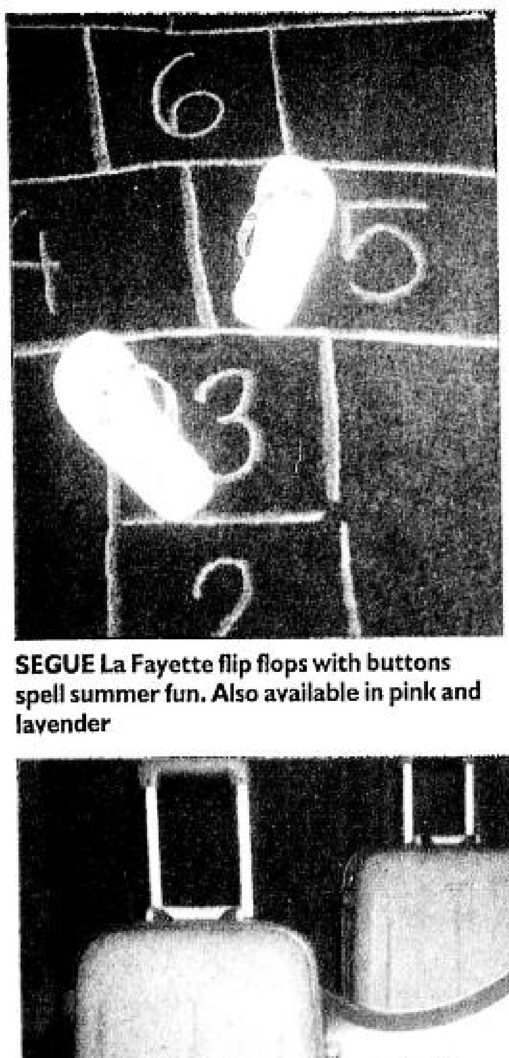
SISLEY Blake nylon bags enhanced by power colors—black and orange or fuchsia and orange



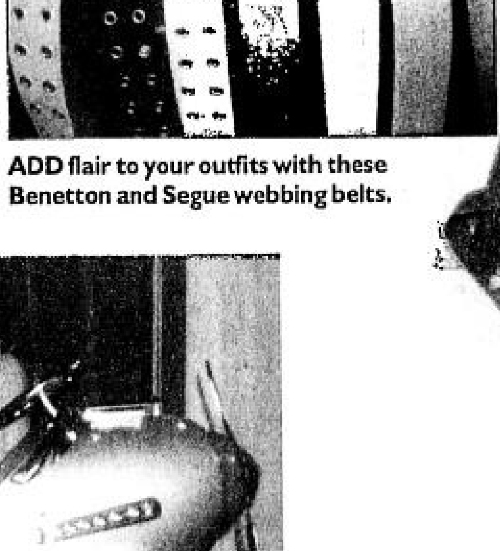
FOR that hot summer night out, Segue offers glittery butterflies to mirror the shiny stars.



CASUAL multi-pocketed braided Molly in blue or apple-green

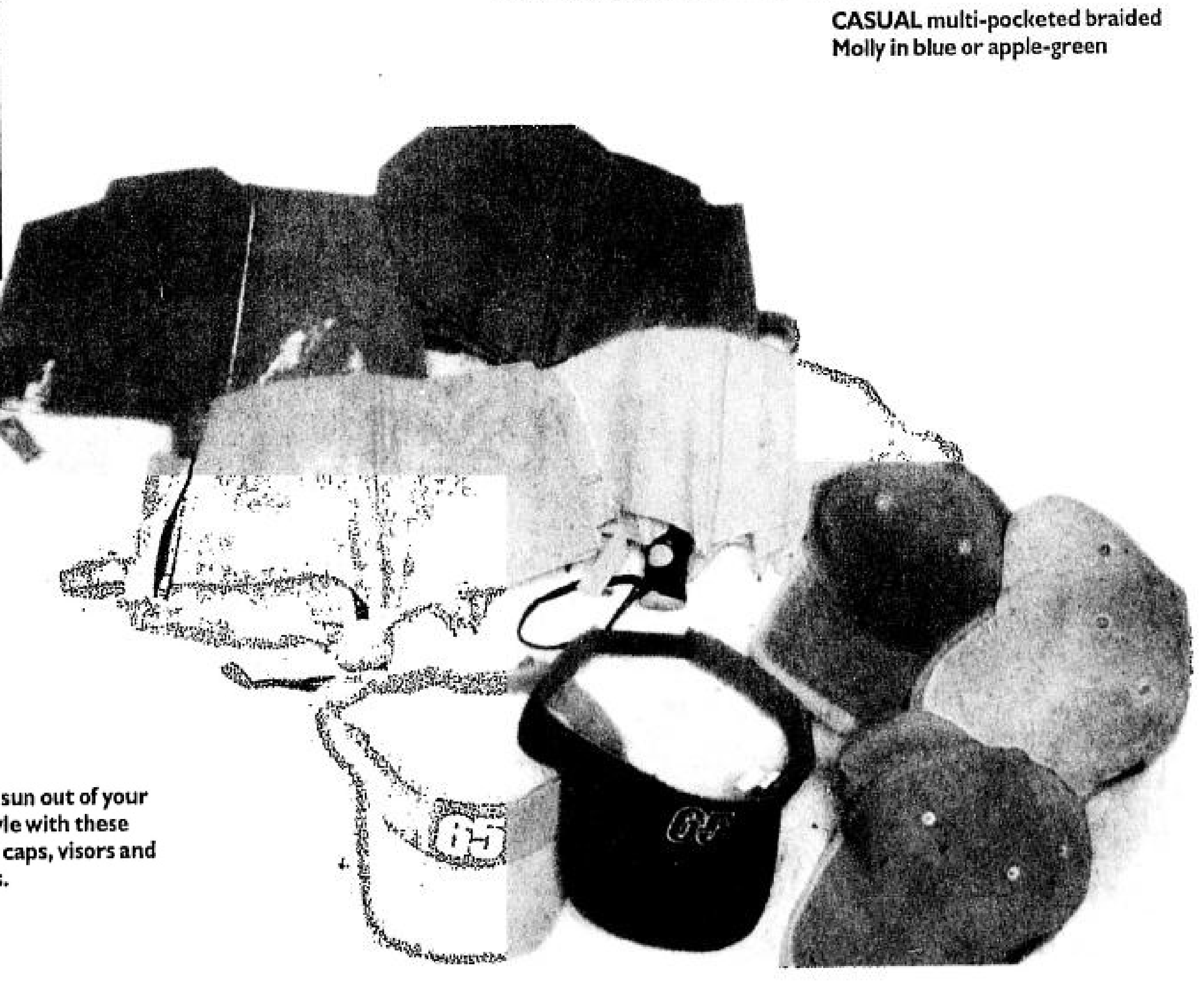


SEGUE La Fayette flip flops with buttons spell summer fun. Also available in pink and lavender



ADD flair to your outfits with these Benetton and Segue webbing belts.

THE ABSOLUTE Benetton fave easy pieces of luggage feature the season's latest colors.



KEEP the sun out of your eyes in style with these Benetton caps, visors and umbrellas.

Our network's growth is dedicated to you.

Due to your overwhelming response, we are committed to expanding our network to accommodate our fast-growing Sun Cellular family. Our development is being fast-tracked:

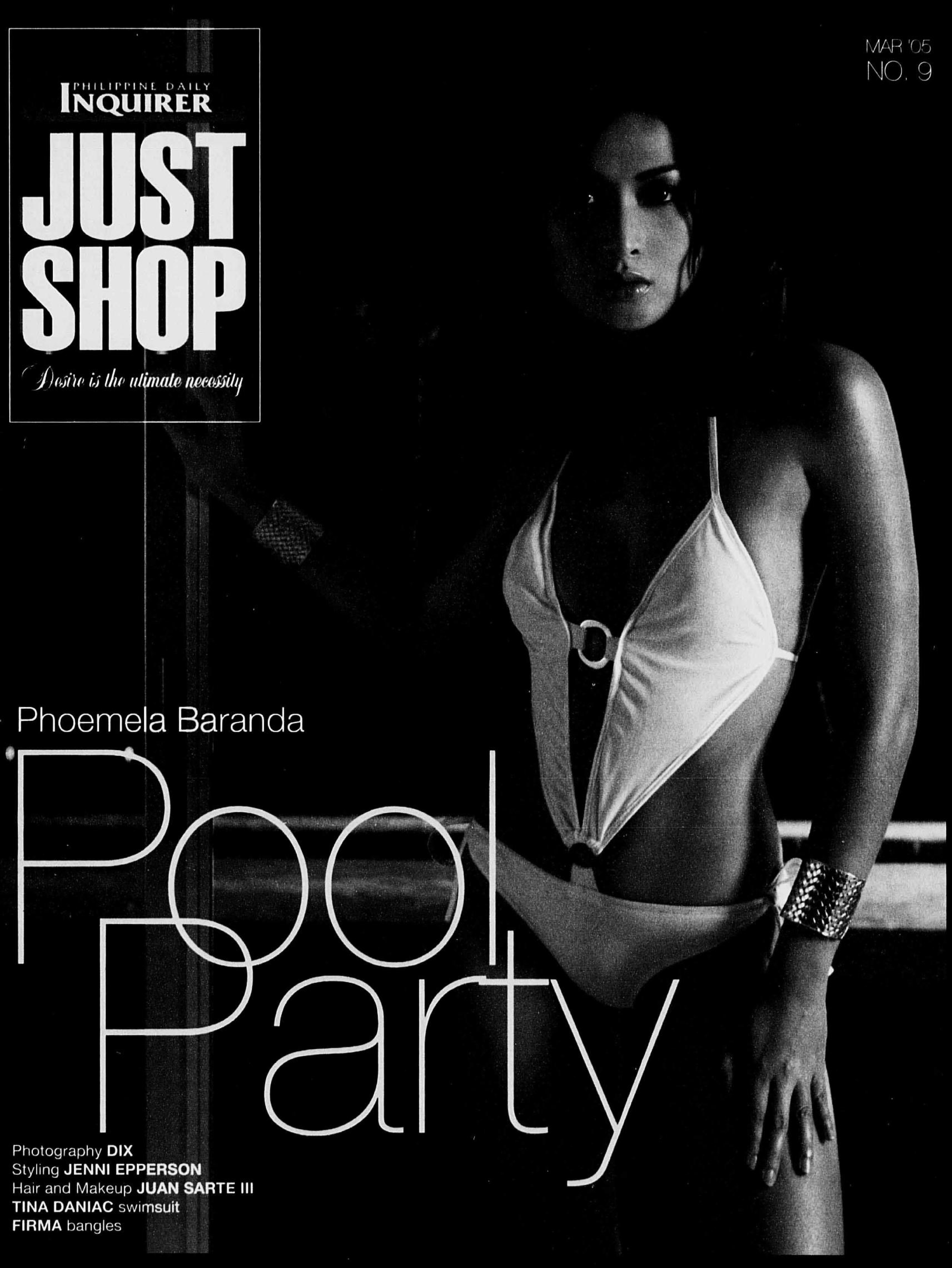
- An infusion of $200 million to add more cell sites, switches, transmission links, and other essential infrastructure which will build and expand the network.
- Network capacity of 3 million subscribers by mid-year. Network capacity of 6 million subscribers by end of 2005.
- Coverage expansion to increase the current 1,300 cell sites to about 2,000 by end of 2005.
- Partnership with the best technology-driven suppliers to double the speed of expansion and gear us up for the next generation wireless technology.

Better network. Better value.
That's what's in store for the most
important thing under the Sun – YOU.

SUN
CELLULAR
Everything Important is Under the Sun

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
JUST
SHOP
Desire is the ultimate necessity

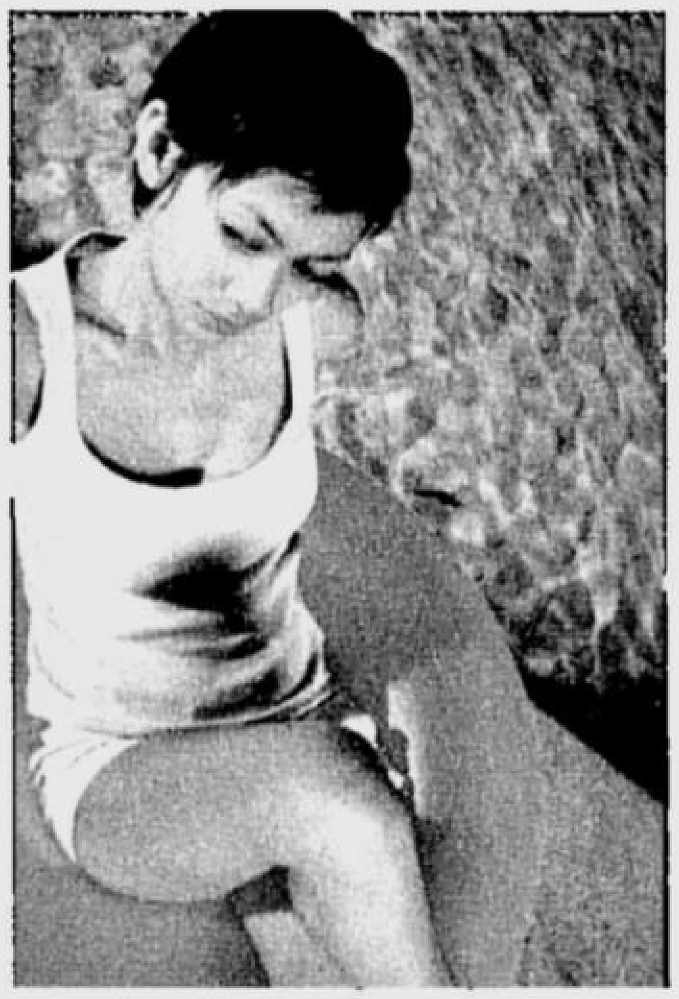
MAR '05
NO. 9



Phoemela Baranda

Pool Party

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**
Hair and Makeup **JUAN SARTE III**
TINA DANIAC swimsuit
FIRMA bangles



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JENNI EPPERSON

design
DIX
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KATRINA CRUZ
columnist / writer
AMINA ARANAZ

Philippine Daily Inquirer
Lifestyle Editor
CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO

copy editor
ELVIRA MATA

Dive In!

Summer has officially started. Plunge into the hottest styles. Make this season your sexiest ever with **JUST SHOP**'s Summer in the City Special.

While most of us are at the tail end of our work mode, in our dreams, we're **Bora Bound** or already in Palawan. Since classes end third week of March (yes, we're counting the days), getting away will have to wait. But reveling in style starts now.

The buzz phrase this month is **pool parties**! Lounge lizards will be in a tizzy with the variety of lounge wear in this issue -- from cut-out maillot to cocktail dresses to tunics – they're worthy of any next-door neighbor's pool party.

What to do this summer? Chill out at the beach, fake bake and don't forget **Cat Juan**'s **Zips**. Because this time, anything hardcore is taboo.

Get effortlessly dressed, tanned and accessorized. Indulge in some fun under the sun. Mabuhay!

Jenni Ep.

Irene Pineda bag charms, P550 each, **SCHU**

Metal robots and fruit cocktail bag tags for the picking

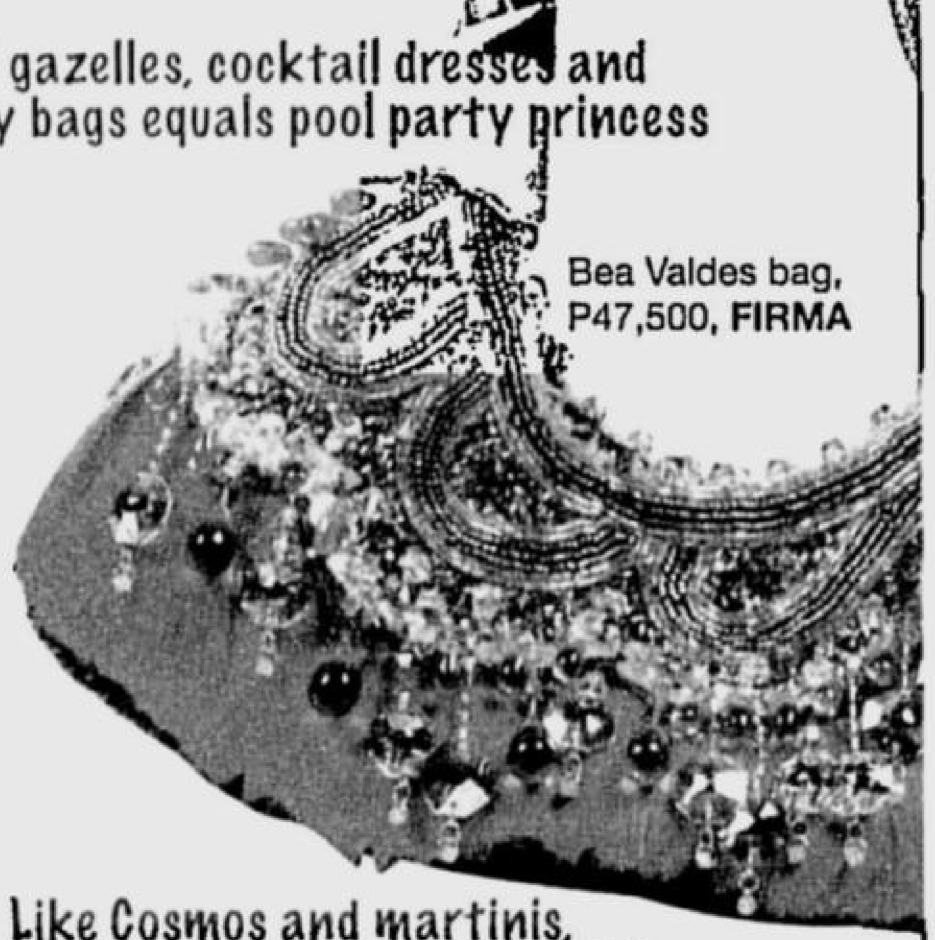
A splice of wedge is good for the sole

BOTTEGA VENETA wedge, P44,500

Get 'em while theyre hot! Tigerlily available at Rustan's V.

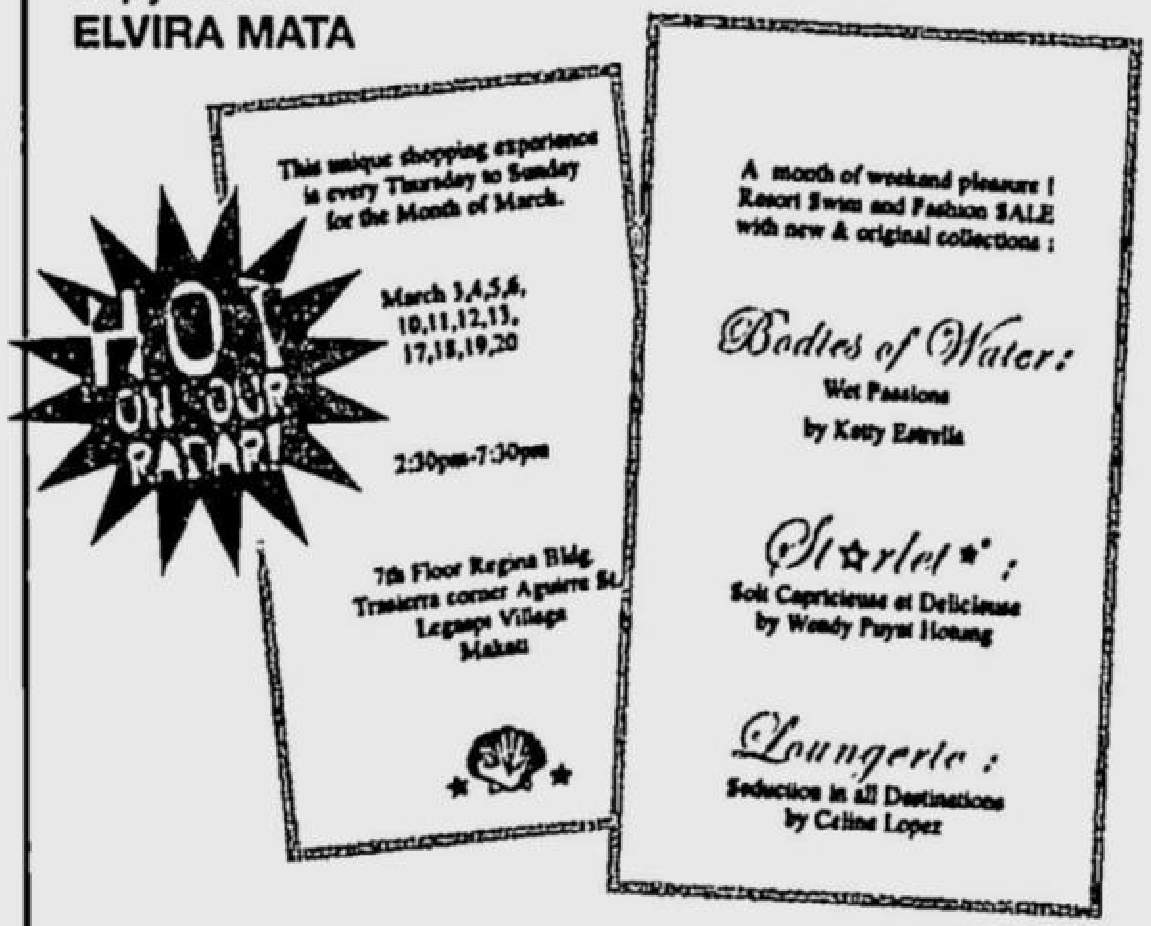
GIRLSHOPPE bangle, P195

Big, bold baubles make waves this season



Tanned gazelles, cocktail dresses and glittery bags equals pool party princess

Bea Valdes bag, P47,500, **FIRMA**



HOT ON OUR RADAR!

This unique shopping experience is every Thursday to Sunday for the Month of March.

March 3,4,5,6,
10,11,12,13,
17,18,19,20

2:30pm-7:30pm

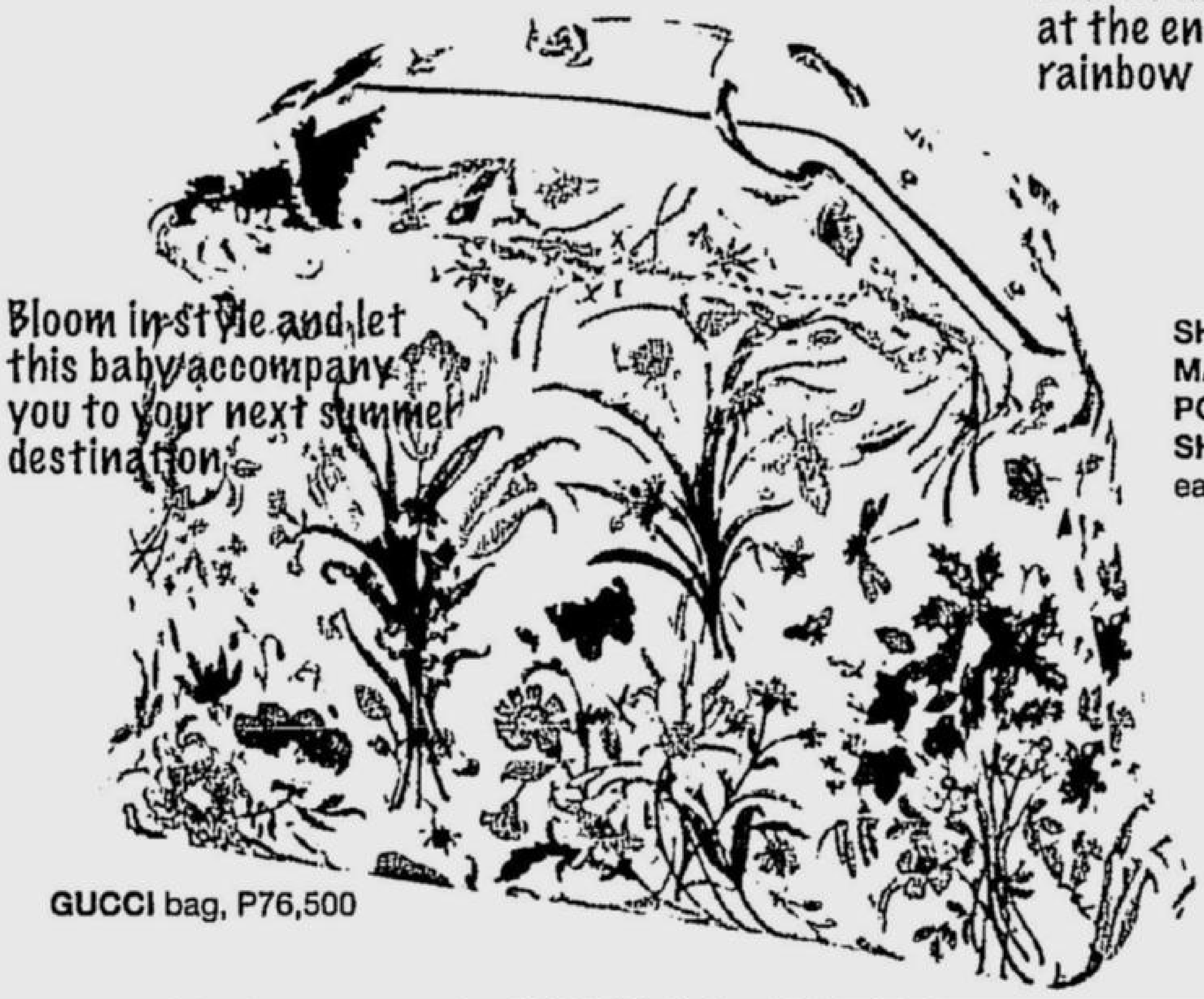
7th Floor Regina Bldg.
Trasierra corner Aguirre St.
Legaspi Village
Makati

A month of weekend pleasure !
Resort Swim and Fashion SALE
with new & original collections :

Bodies of Water:
Wet Passions
by Ketty Estrella

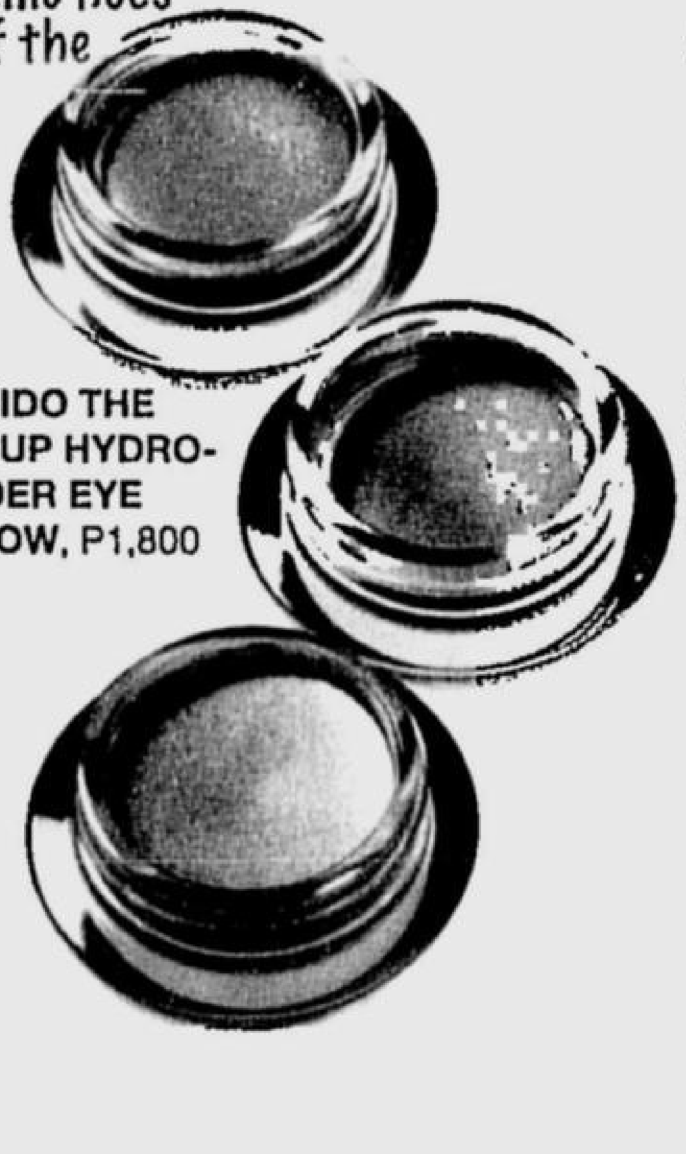
St☆rlet:*
Soit Capricieuse et Delicieuse
by Wendy Puyat Houang

Loungerie :
Seduction in all Destinations
by Celine Lopez



Bloom in style and let this baby accompany you to your next summer destination

GUCCI bag, P76,500



Pots of metallic hues at the end of the rainbow

SHISEIDO THE MAKEUP HYDRO-POWDER EYE SHADOW, P1,800 each

Like Cosmos and martinis, cocktail rings give that much-needed style boz

JEWELITE rings
(Clockwise from top): Gold ring, P1,750, silver ring, P1,150, black and white ring, P1,250, all from **NAIL SPA**

I'd love to get your comments or suggestions. E-mail me at jenni_shops@inquirer.com.ph or text INQUIRER JSHOP NAME/CITY/MESSAGE to 2207 for Globe or 283 for Smart subscribers.

Vita Velvet

Spa in a Facial

The ultimate spa experience is now in a facial treatment! Vita Velvet – an age-defying luxurious facial spa combining a deep-cleansing facial and rejuvenating massage. It revitalizes your skin with a specially reformulated anti-ageing ampoule, reducing visible ageing signs while reviving elasticity and suppleness. To make it a truly pleasurable experience, a soothing facial mask and pampering massage lock in the nutrients, making the effects last longer.

Call the Facial Care Centre professionals now.

CALL

892-SKIN

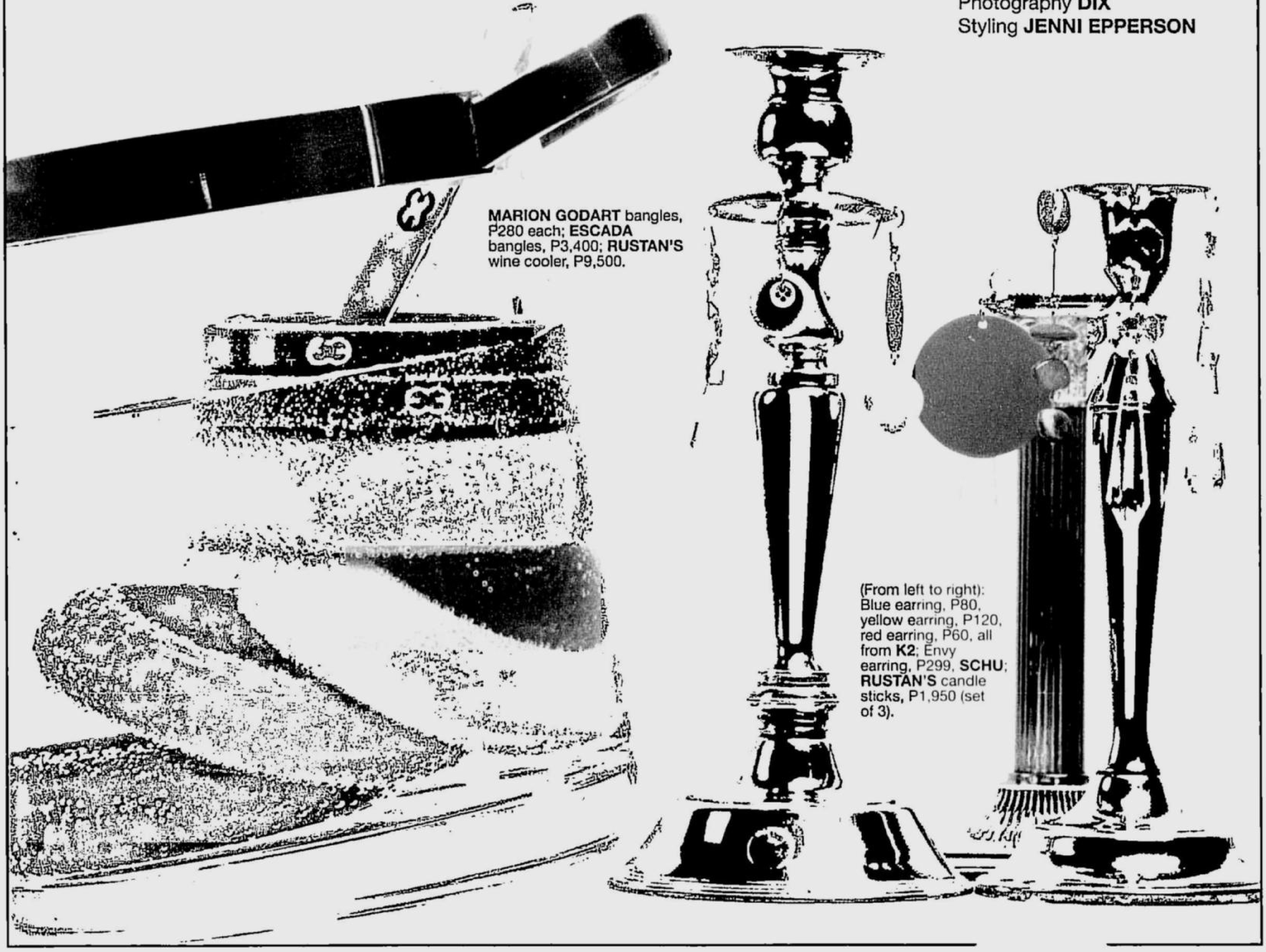
www.facialcarecentre.com.ph

Facial care centre

MAKATI • ORTIGAS • QUEZON CITY • SHAW • ALABANG • BINONDO • CONGRESSIONAL • PAMPANGA (961-3404) • CEBU (233-7631)

Quick! Hide the silver. Laid-back glamour means wining and dining on polished plastic. Stack them in all shades juicy for a feast of bright, shiny treats.

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**



MARION GODART bangles, P280 each; **ESCADA** bangles, P3,400; **RUSTAN'S** wine cooler, P9,500.

(From left to right): Blue earring, P80, yellow earring, P120, red earring, P60, all from **K2**; Envy earring, P299, **SCHU**; **RUSTAN'S** candle sticks, P1,950 (set of 3).

Recommends Recommends Recommends Recommends
Just Shop

Urban Spa Luxury Polish

This 60-minute skin exfoliation uses sea salts from Jordan and virgin coconut oil, with a light massage with honey moisturizing the skin back to its youthful glow.

Get a free His & Hers Simple Pleasures soap for every 2 Luxury Polish beginning this March (valid until supplies last).

Visit them at the 5th level Shangri-La Plaza Mall 687-6195.

4

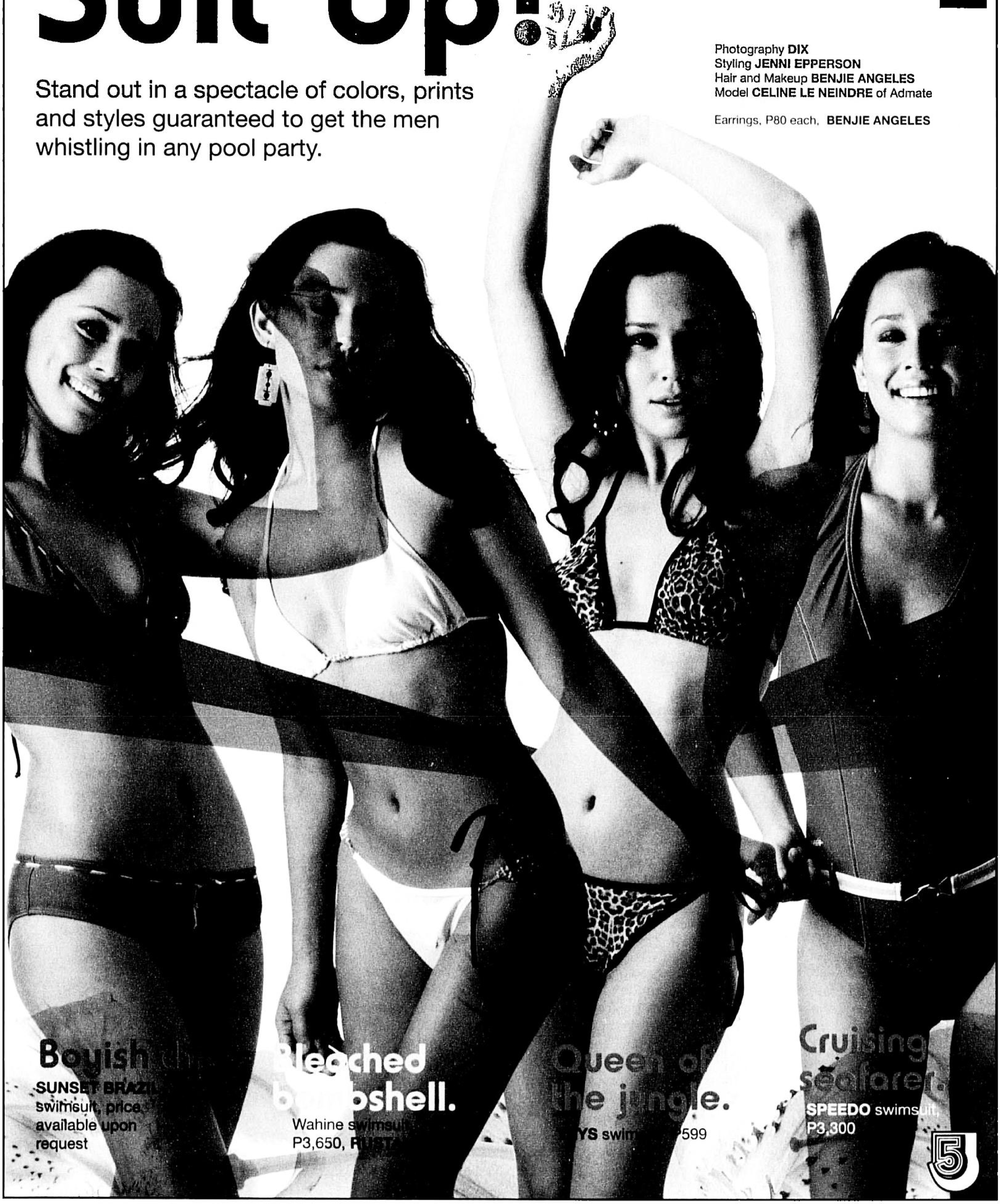
Suit Up!

get the look

Stand out in a spectacle of colors, prints and styles guaranteed to get the men whistling in any pool party.

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**
Hair and Makeup **BENJIE ANGELES**
Model **CELINE LE NEINDRE** of Admate

Earrings, P80 each, **BENJIE ANGELES**



Boyish ch

SUNSET BRAZIL swimsuit, price available upon request

Bleached bombshell.

Wahine swimsuit, P3,650, **RUST**

Queen of the jungle.

YS swim P599

Cruising seafarer.

SPEEDO swimsuit, P3,300

just shop essay

Say Goodbye to Throwaway Summer Chic

By **LEICA R. CARPO**

Winter is finally over, spring is around the corner, while summer waits in the wings. Can't wait for fall, though . . .

It seems strange writing about four seasons in a country where there are only two: dry and wet.

But you see, the fashion industry has four seasons. I think it's a legitimate excuse to shop for clothes every three months or so without having to feel guilty. You gotta love the industry for that.

Before the start of any season, I go through my wardrobe and purge items I no longer love or I have worn to near death. If you love clothes as much as I do, it can be a struggle deciding what to keep, what to repair, what to chuck.

I imagine that even practical shoppers – those with amazing will power to buy only what they need – would find it difficult to give away their "well thought-out before purchasing" stuff.

If you don't clean the closet (because you keep your clothes mothballed in "bauls") or if your closet looks like a jumble sale, please! Just go in there and purge.

Now.

You need to make room so you can shop for more fun, fab stuff.

This year, for some reason, I find it especially difficult to make the transition from winter to spring and summer gear probably because I have become so attached to my furry, abominable snowman boots.

It's easy for me to become fond of wardrobe items regardless of how "five minutes ago" they've become.

Is it any small wonder that our need for closet space increases as we get older, not just to make room for the next new thing, but to store memories of our purchases past?

If I had my way, I would convert my garage into another walk-in closet. But until I have the luxury of more storage space—purge I must.

So should you. All together now . . .

To make purging less painful, and so you can chuck last season's to-die-for-bag without guilt, start chanting: There are so many new things to buy out there!

This summer, the options seem limitless.

A word of advice to the shopaholic: Choose well. Reviewing my past wardrobes, a lot of items I bought last summer fall under throwaway chic, a.k.a. fashion you wear once and throw.

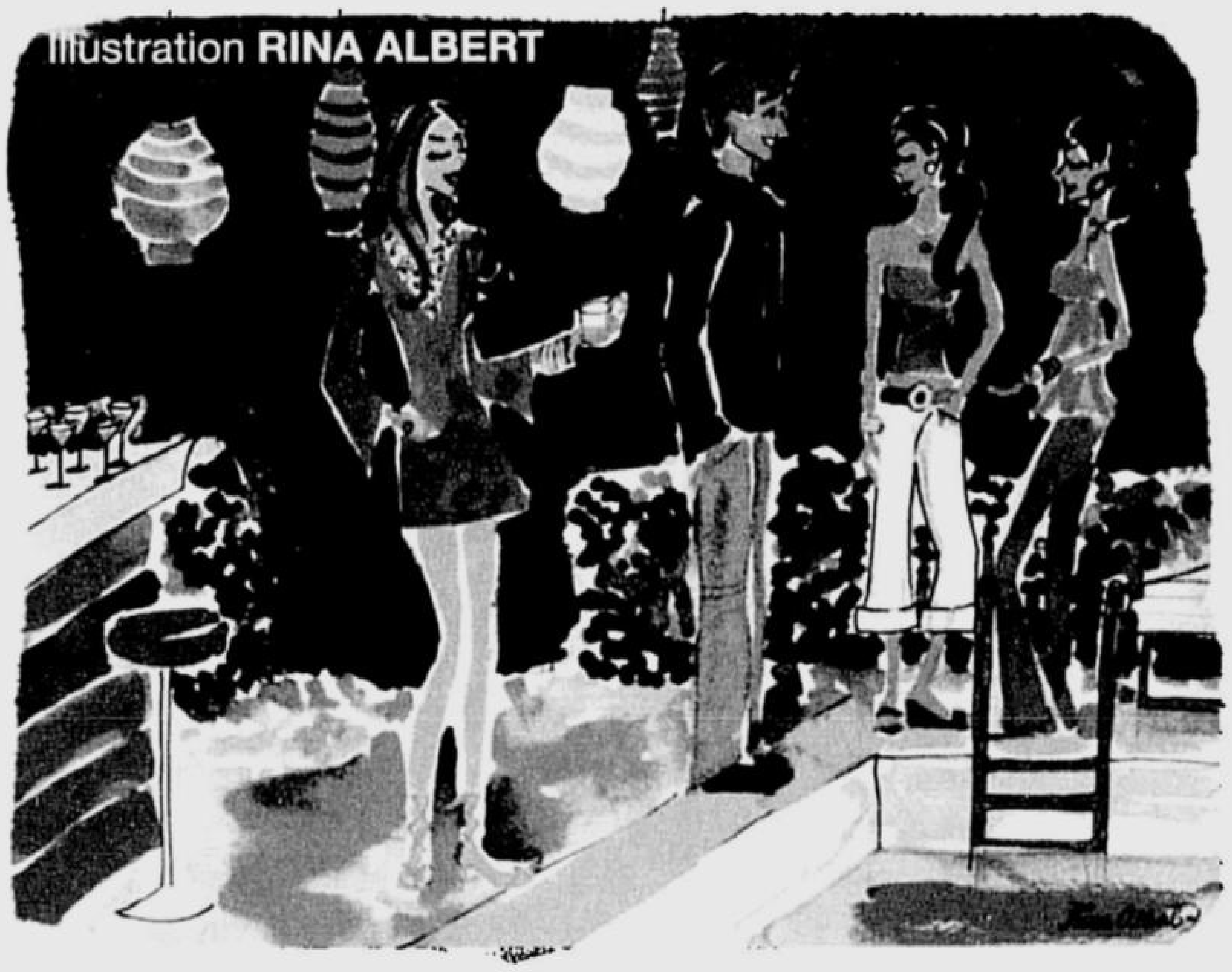


Illustration **RINA ALBERT**

In retrospect, rubber flip-flops from Divisoria, straw hats from Boracay and embellished jeans from Bangkok's Chatuchak market seem like a terrible waste of money. Now that I am older and hopefully more savvy, I plan to purchase summer gear with pedigree. I define these as items as wearable in the following venues: lounging at the beach in St. Tropez, hanging out at the Hamptons or decorating a penthouse pool for a Hugh Hefner theme party.

Looking at the trends hatched or reworked each summer – from nautical to safari to stealth wealth -- my favorite is still the bohemian look.

This year, it's been revamped and renamed "boho luxe." They're '60s fashion in rich fabrics and often embellished with real rocks.

Don't let the word bohemian fool you! Granted that a few pieces can be scored at your local tiangge or flea market, very few people actually get away with "head-to-toe segunda-mano porma." After all, there's a reason why someone gave all that stuff away...

My summer shopping list currently consists of: Silk and cotton caftans from **Souk** and **Silk Cocoon**. Lightweight knits in cool pastels from **Tan-Gan**. Gladiator sandals and thongs from **Solea** -- in every color from metallic to bright pink. Cropped vintage kimono from **Rajo Laurel**'s ready-to-wear line . . .

That's just the tip of the iceberg because I haven't even gotten down to lingerie.

This season's collection comes in a rainbow of divine colors and materials best worn exposed. Splurge on expensive, sexy underwear. They're always a good investment, and if you take good care of them they'll never make it to the chuck category. As an added bonus, they take so little closet space.

I could go on and on about the latest **Cosabella** camisole summer collection (order online) or my **Robin's** egg blue camisole and drawstring pants I bought at **Fred Segals** in Los Angeles, but for now I think I will walk around the house in my abominable snowman boots one last time before I chuck them. Got to make room for those platform wedges.

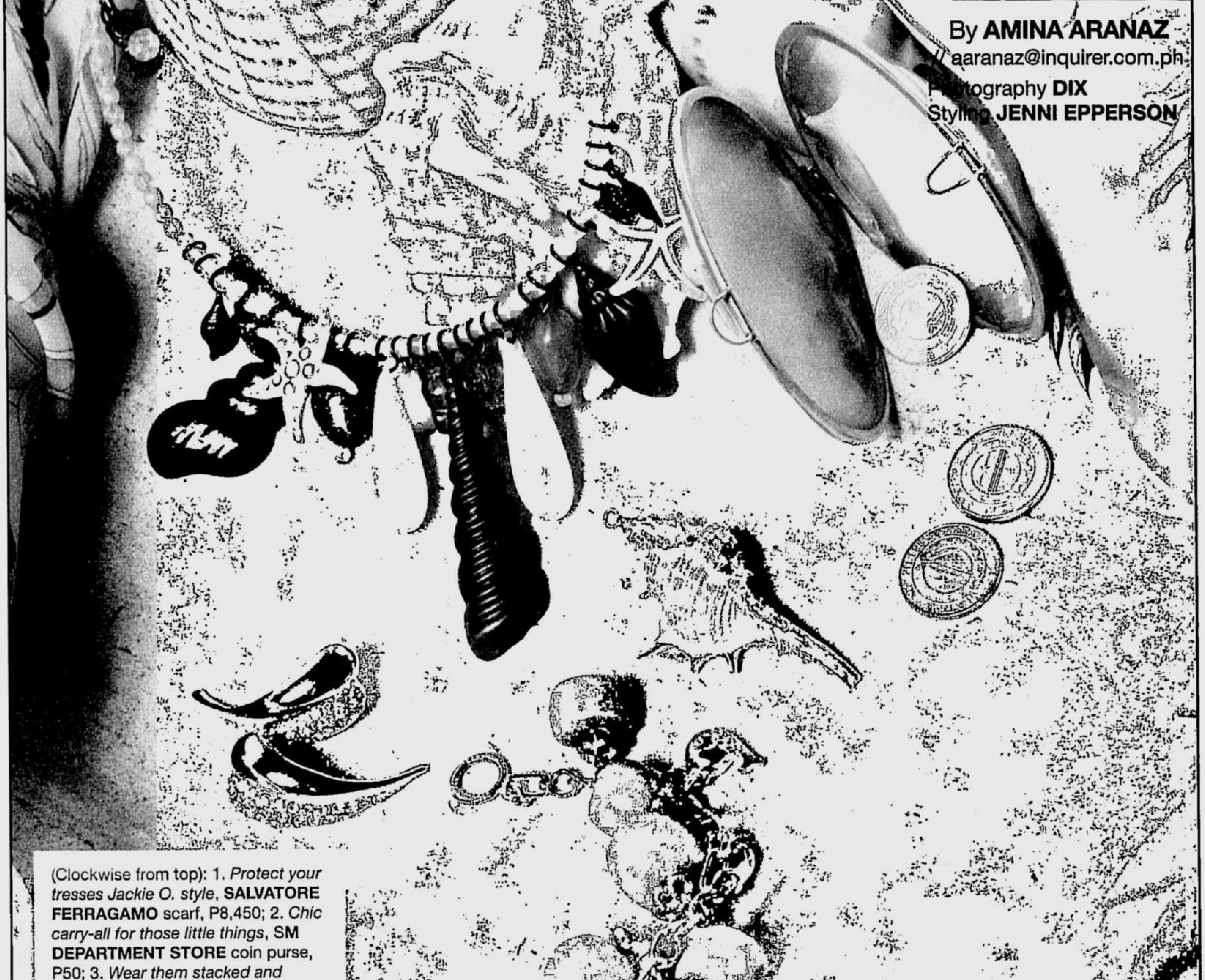
Our need for closet space increases as we get older, not just to make room for the next new thing but also to store memories of purchases past.

Seaside Glam

Go for the GOLD in your fave bikini (or a maillot for those who still can). Accessorize with precious sea treasures!

By **AMINA ARANAZ**
aaranaz@inquirer.com.ph

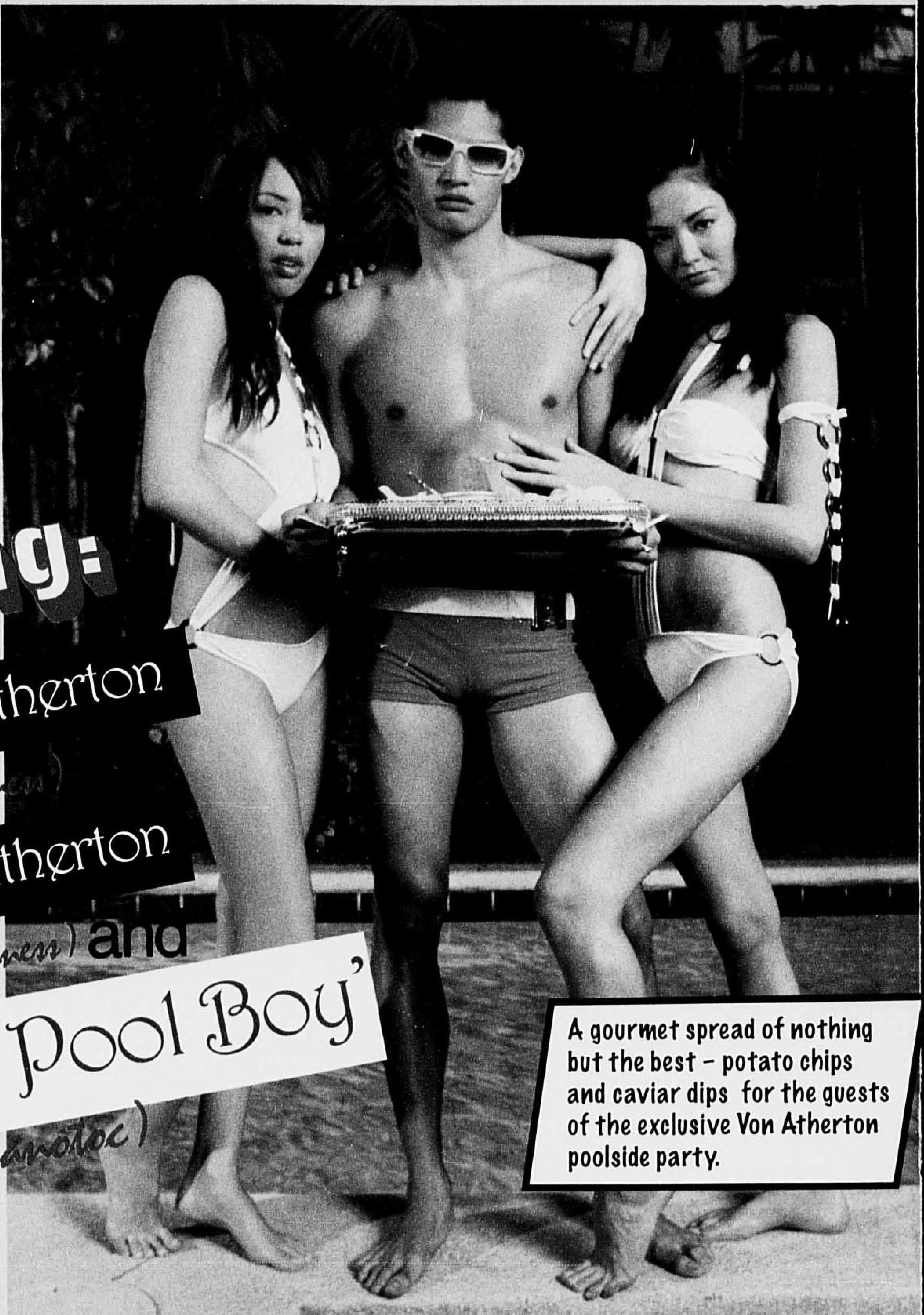
Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**



(Clockwise from top): 1. *Protect your tresses Jackie O. style*, **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO** scarf, P8,450; 2. *Chic carry-all for those little things*, **SM DEPARTMENT STORE** coin purse, P50; 3. *Wear them stacked and frivolous*, **GREENHILLS TIANGGE** pendant, P150; 4. *Add sparkle to your beachwear*, **A.CONSPIRACY** bracelet, P300; 5. *Perk up your ears*, **MARCELLA'S** earrings, P85; 6. *Bling around the collar*, **MARION GODART** necklace, P2,750.

Lounge Act

Like the stars of an old MGM musical, Tiffany and Amber Von Atherton lead extravagant lives, throw fabulous parties, and have men wrapped around their fingers. It's the world of the young and loaded -- where men are born to serve women and breathe beauty to their homes.



starring:

Tiffany Von Atherton
(Ornussa Cadness)
Amber Von Atherton
(Dara Cadness) and
Pepe 'Le Pool Boy'
(Borgy Manotoc)

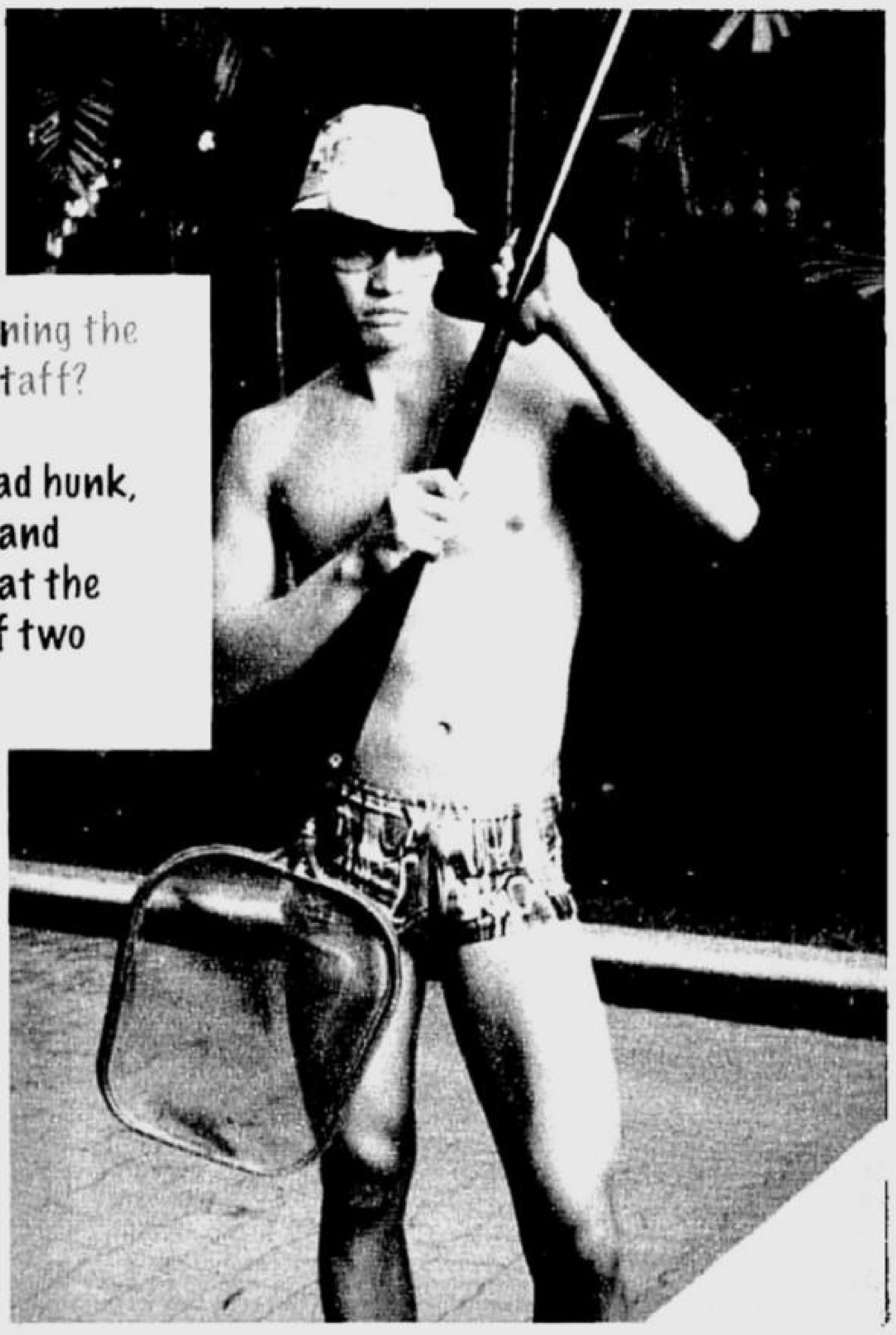
A gourmet spread of nothing but the best - potato chips and caviar dips for the guests of the exclusive Von Atherton poolside party.

On Amber: **TINA DANIAC** swimsuit and necklace, price available upon request. **On Pepe 'Le Pool Boy'**: **SPEEDO** boyleg shorts, P1,100; **PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE** sunglasses, P199; **TINA DANIAC** belt, price available upon request; Queen Anne tray, P2,950, **RUSTAN'S**. **On Tiffany**: **TINA DANIAC** swimsuit and necklace, price available upon request.

I have the world (and our pool boy) at my feet.

On Tiffany: [illegible]icoco swimsuit, price available upon request, **ISHQ**; Bead bracelets, P[illegible]80 each, thin bangle, P100, all from **MARION GODART**; **ESCADA** belt, P16,650; Hanoi Made bag, P2,940, **FIRMA**. On 'Pepe Le Pool Boy': **POLO GARAGE** tunic top, P2,[illegible]0; **SPEEDO** boyleg [illegible], P1,100; Ray-Ban sunglasses, P5,990, **VIVIAN SARABIA WORLD OF OPTICS.**

On 'Pepe Le Pool Boy': **SPEEDO** trunks, P1,100; **GUCCI** hat, P19,500; Ray-Ban sunglasses, P5,990, **VIVIAN SARABIA WORLD OF OPTICS.**



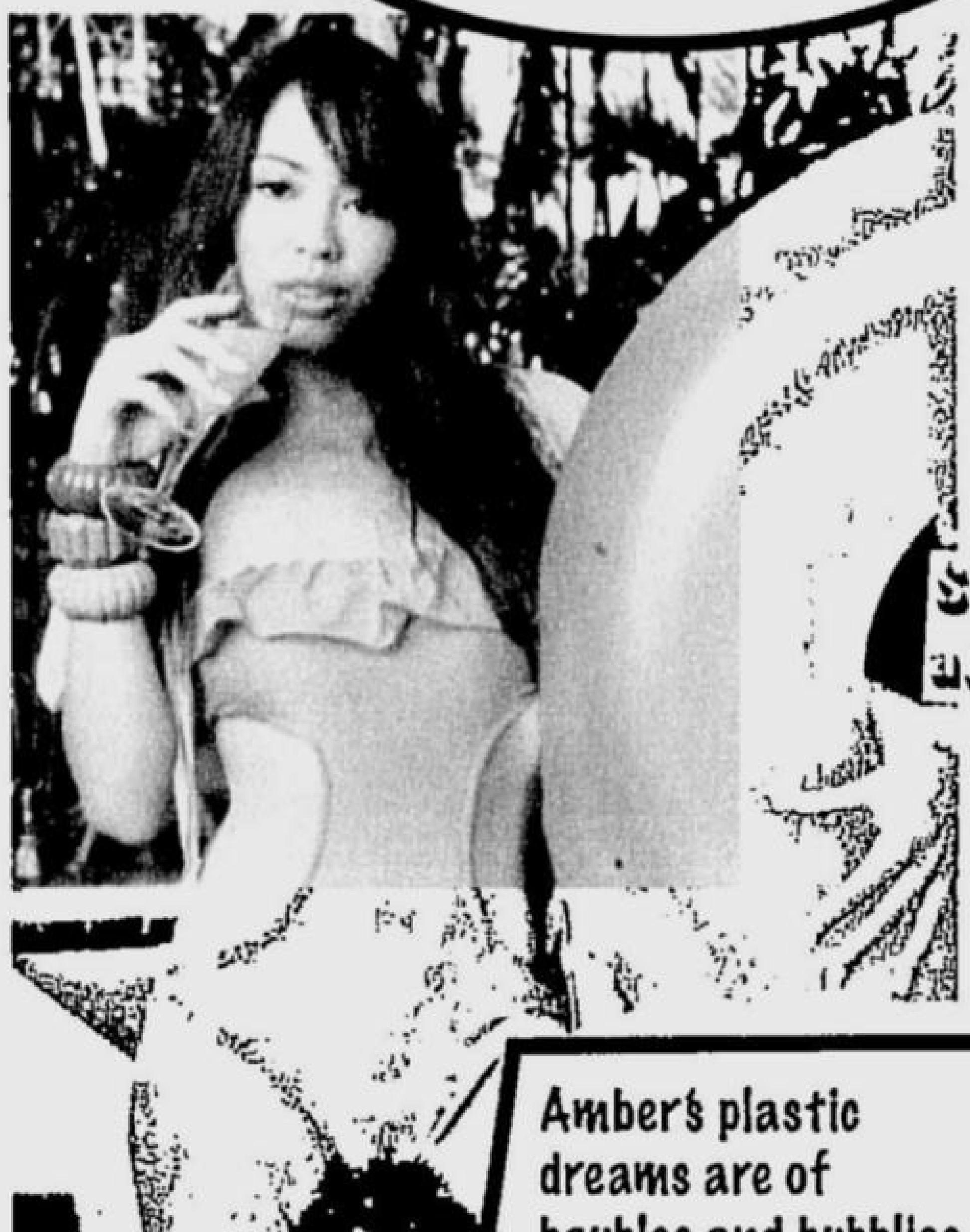
Dreaming of joining the Von Atherton staff? You must be:

1. a chlorine-clad hunk,
2. long-legged, and
3. willing to be at the beck and call of two lovely sisters.

On Tiffany: **MANGO** top, P2,999; Wahine swimsuit, P4,250 (bottom not shown), **RUSTAN'S**; **SUNSET BRAZIL** swimsuit, price available upon request (top not shown); **MARION GODART** necklace, P560; **LUSTRO** bag, P28,700.

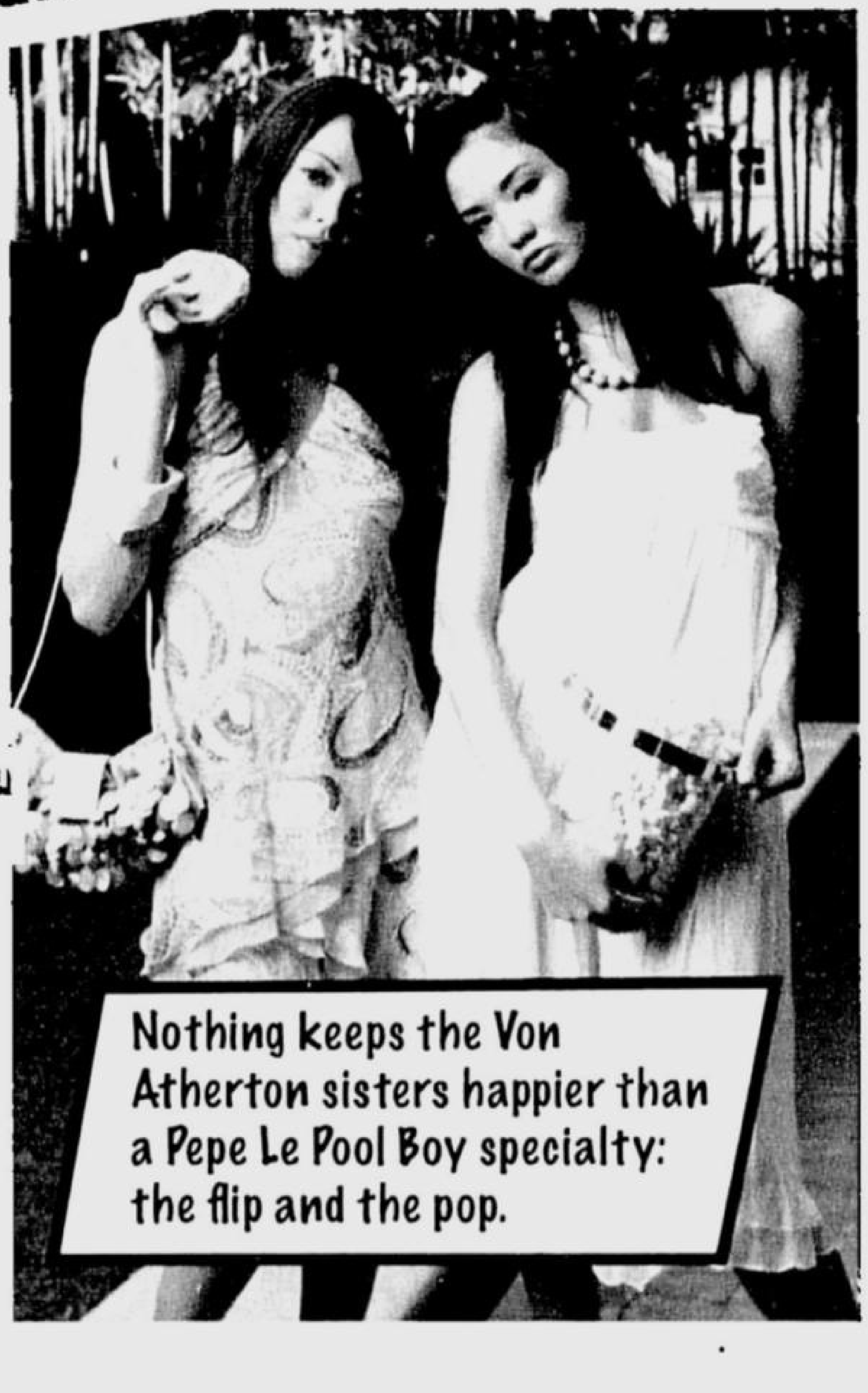
Fall prey to Tiffany Von Atherton's come-hither look.

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**
Hair and Makeup **AJ BAGUIO**

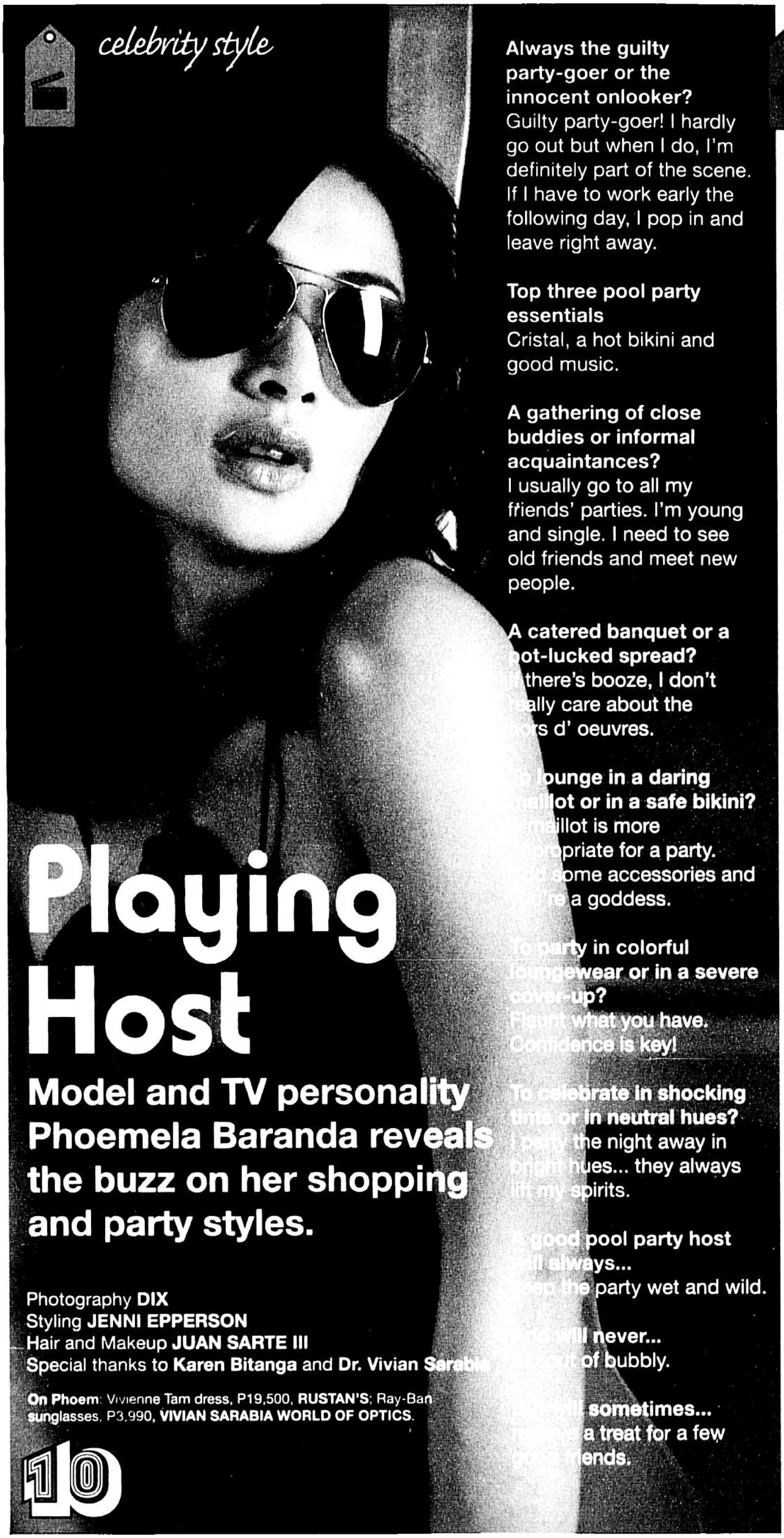


Amber's plastic dreams are of baubles and bubblies.

Special thanks to Karen Bitanga and Dr. Vivian Sarabia



Nothing keeps the Von Atherton sisters happier than a Pepe Le Pool Boy specialty: the flip and the pop.



Playing Host

Model and TV personality Phoemela Baranda reveals the buzz on her shopping and party styles.

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**
Hair and Makeup **JUAN SARTE III**
Special thanks to **Karen Bitanga** and **Dr. Vivian Sarabia**

On Phoem: Vivienne Tam dress, P19,500, **RUSTAN'S**; Ray-Ban sunglasses, P3,990, **VIVIAN SARABIA WORLD OF OPTICS**.

Always the guilty party-goer or the innocent onlooker?
Guilty party-goer! I hardly go out but when I do, I'm definitely part of the scene. If I have to work early the following day, I pop in and leave right away.

Top three pool party essentials
Cristal, a hot bikini and good music.

A gathering of close buddies or informal acquaintances?
I usually go to all my friends' parties. I'm young and single. I need to see old friends and meet new people.

A catered banquet or a pot-lucked spread?
If there's booze, I don't really care about the hors d' oeuvres.

To lounge in a daring maillot or in a safe bikini?
A maillot is more appropriate for a party. Add some accessories and you're a goddess.

To party in colorful loungewear or in a severe cover-up?
Flaunt what you have. Confidence is key!

To celebrate in shocking tints or in neutral hues?
I party the night away in bright hues... they always lift my spirits.

A good pool party host will always...
Keep the party wet and wild.

[illegible] will never...
[illegible] out of bubbly.

[illegible] will sometimes...
[illegible] a treat for a few good friends.

---

cocktail mix

Be bold and daring. Brighten up your office wardrobe by mixing outrageous colors and unexpected prints.

fruit punch

POLO GARAGE blazer, P4,850
MANGO top, P999
POLO GARAGE shorts, P2,520
YSL bag, P49,500

citrus delight

K2 dress, P796
SALVATORE FERRAGAMO scarf, P8,450
ESCADA bag, P52,000

Photography **DIX** • Styling **JENNI EPPERSON** • Hair and Makeup **BENJIE ANGELES** • Model **IRA EIGENMANN** of Admate

Culled from every boy's retro fantasy, **Ricky Vicencio** weaves old school glamour with a slew of Technicolor dreams and contemporary design in his recreation of the ultimate in bombshell wear. The new maillot is a cut above a sea of bikinis.

To order call Ricky Vicencio at 0916-3009353.

Wild On!

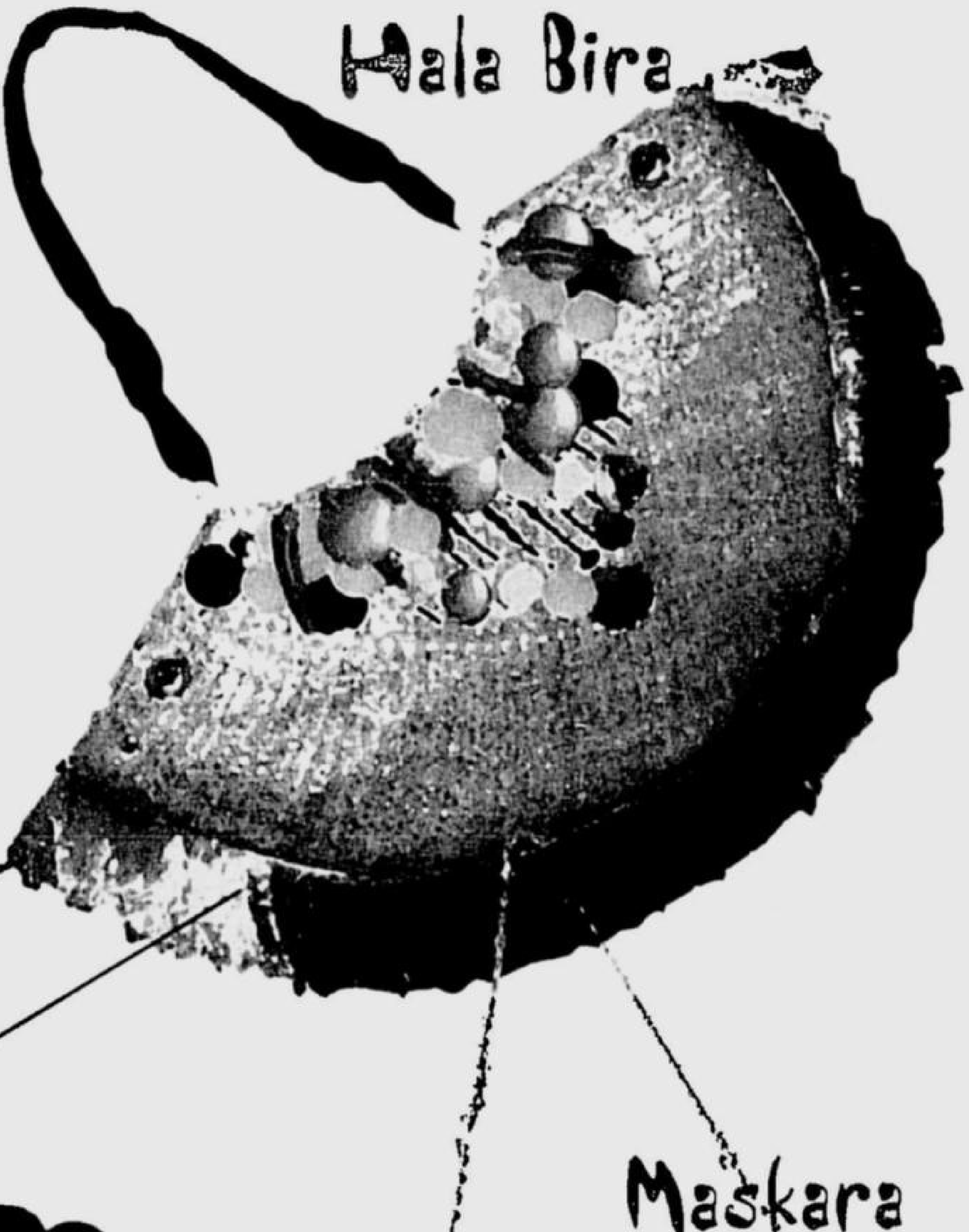
Get into the fiesta groove with the limited edition Ati-atihan collection

ARANAZ bags designer Amina Aranaz teams up with **JUST SHOP**'s Jenni Epperson to bring you the hottest summer bags.

Inspired by the country's lively ATI-ATIHAN festival, the MUST-HAVE bags will keep you cool and stylish this summer, whether sipping cocktails at a pool party or basking in the Boracay sun.

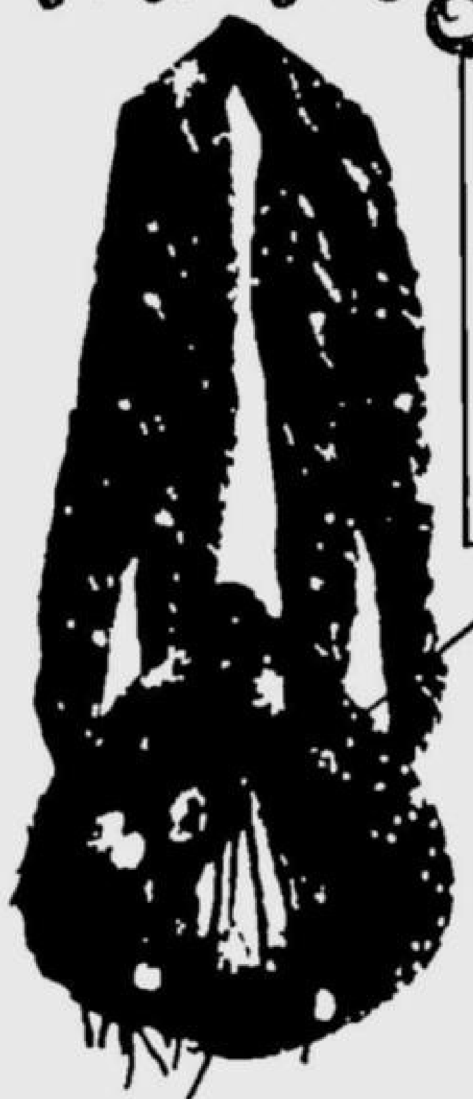
Grab them at ARANAZ bag boutique at City Golf Plaza, Julia Vargas Ave., Pasig City and at Rustan's Shangri-La Mall and Makati, or call 0917-5293828 for pre-orders. Available in March.

Hala Bira



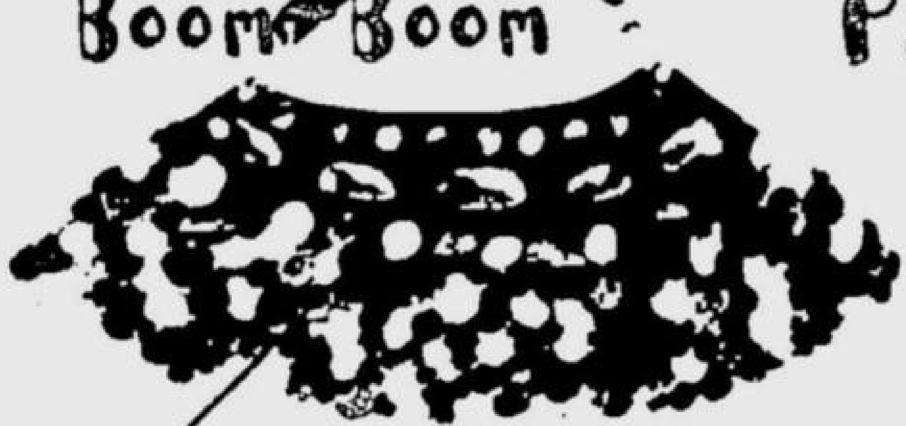
Like the Ati-atihan headdress, this large tote with gold fringes and dangling knickknacks scream HALA BIRA!

Ati-Atiglam



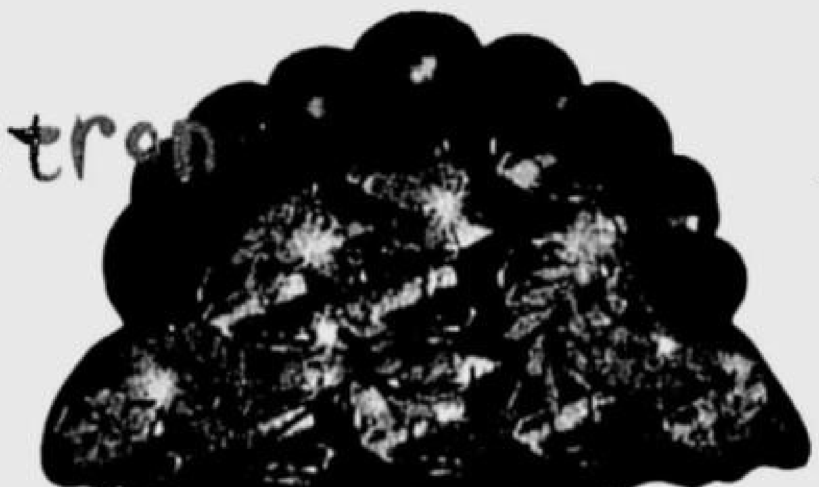
The coconut is ready to party! The humble tropical favorite has a hundred-and-one uses: from refreshing drink to indispensable "bunot" to healthful extra virgin oil. Adorned with semiprecious stones and sparkling beads, it's a super stylish cocktail bag!

Boom Boom



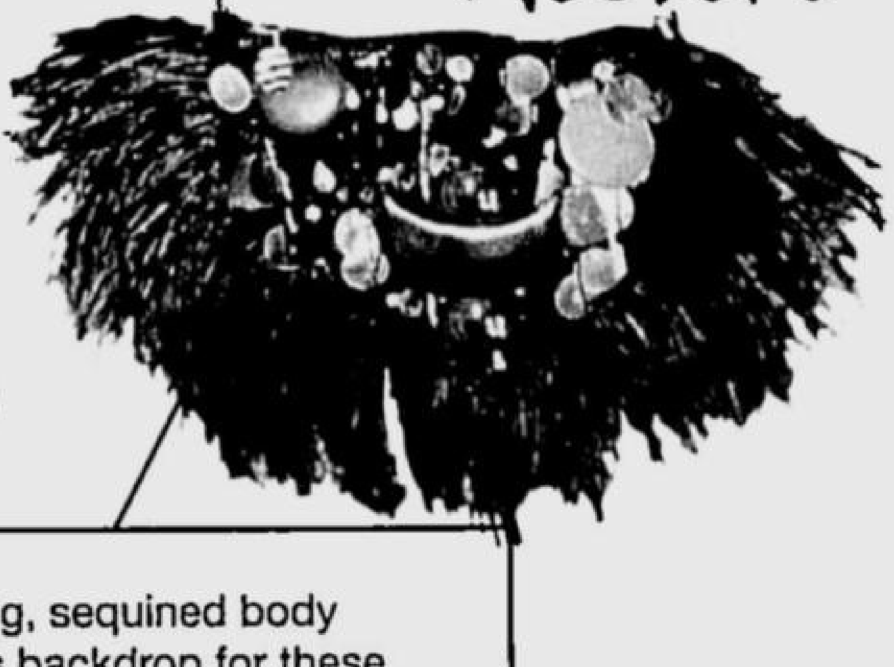
The loud roar of festival drums inspired this eye-catching number! Coconut shell paillettes and mother-of-pearl discs create a grand entrance. Yellow rhinestones add sparkle!

Patron



The lively feast is a homage to the Sto. Niño. A hand-carved crown and a cape of gold brocade confirm the fashionable majesty of the little child. Truly, you're in the presence of divine royalty.

Maskara



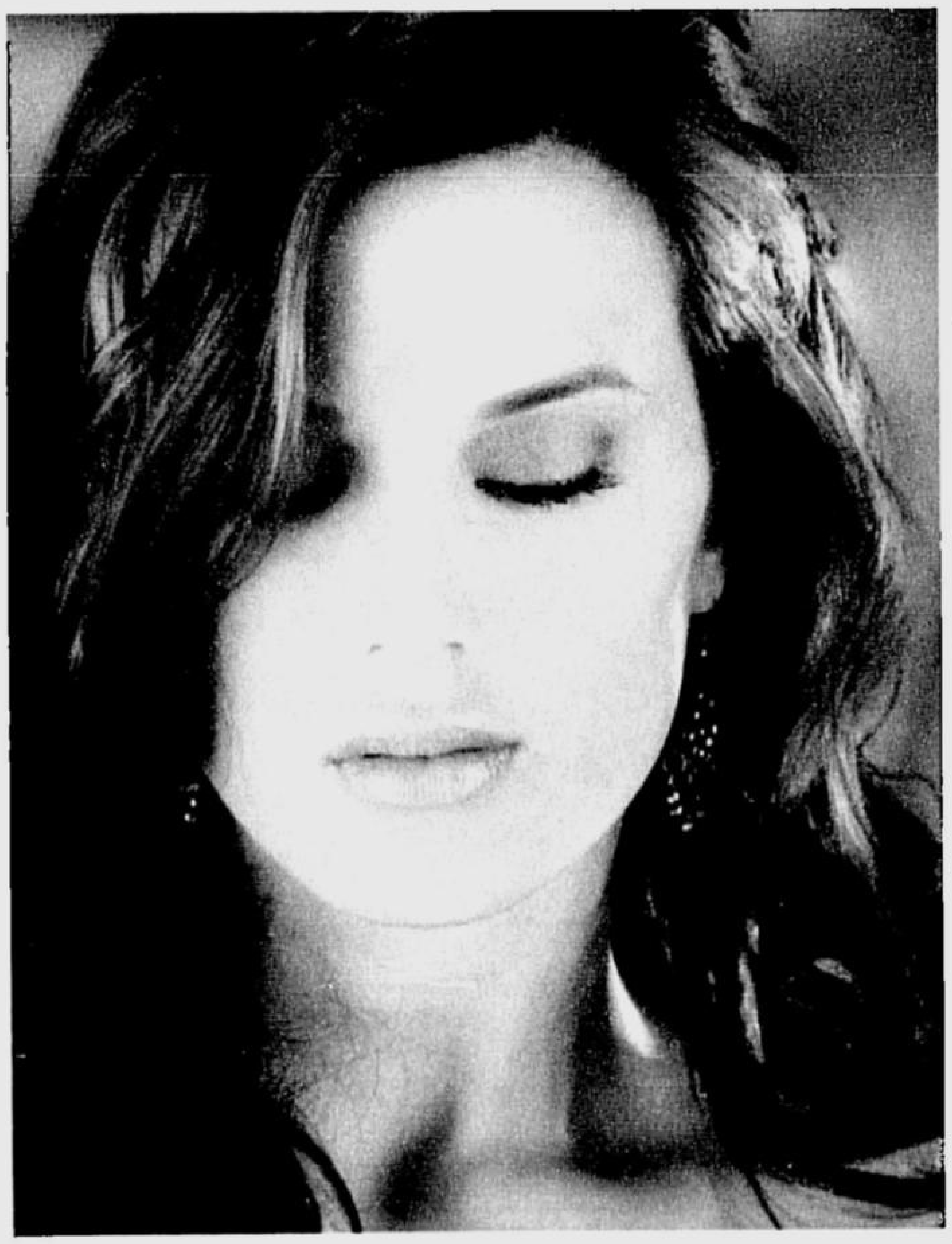
Shimmering, sequined body doubles as backdrop for these finds: ostrich feathers, mother of pearl, onyx stones, horn and fresh water pearls. Can you spot the bright eyes and playful grin?

climax

With light-reflecting, longwearing shades and a 360-degree eye-opening effect, this is the height of **L'Oreal**'s summer makeup collection! Experience a fantasy of colors with **Holographic Eye Shadows.** Lash back at the world with **Panoramic Mascara.**

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI EPPERSON**
Hair & Makeup **BARNEY AGUILAR**
Special thanks to **CELINE GABRIEL** and **CATHY LIM**

PANORAMIC CURL
L'OREAL
PANORAMIC CURL



NUXE
Teint Prodigieux
NUXE
NUXE
Soleil Prodigieux
NUXE
Huile Prodigieuse Or
50 ml 1.6 FL. OZ.

Fall in love with a...

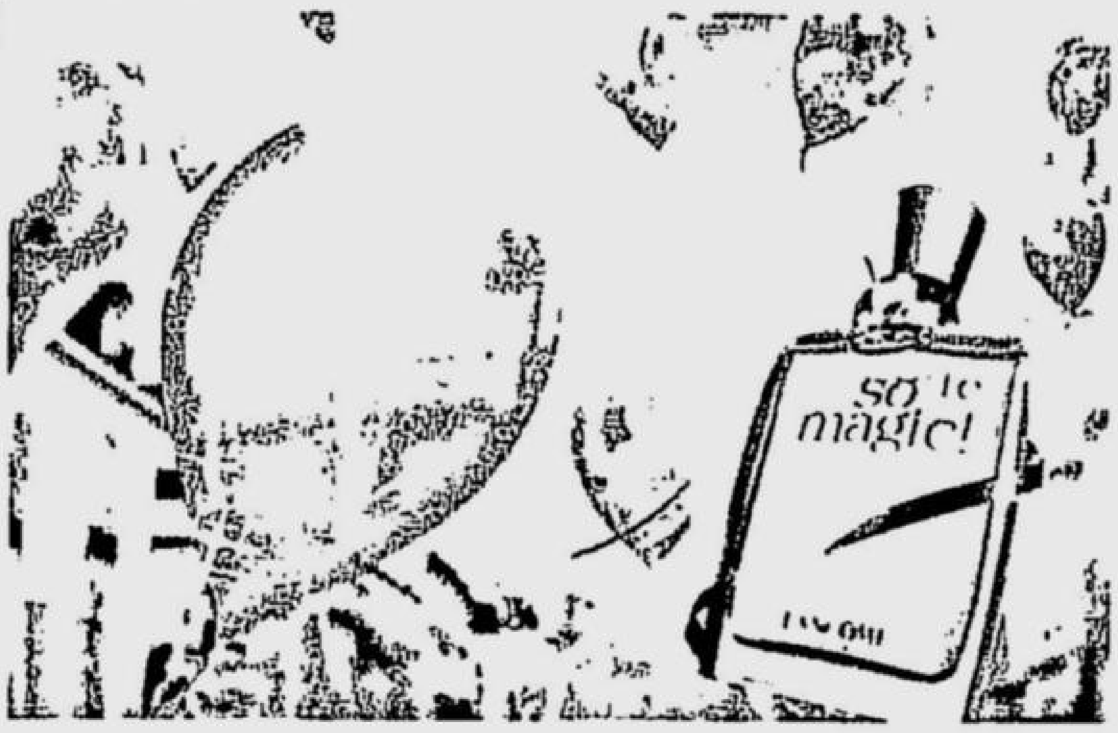
Bronzed Goddess

Ethereal and pure. Beauty intensified from within. **NUXE HUILE PRODIGIEUSE OR**, P1,350, available at **FIRST AID** and **CHOCOLATE CLOTHING CO.**

Sweet Siren

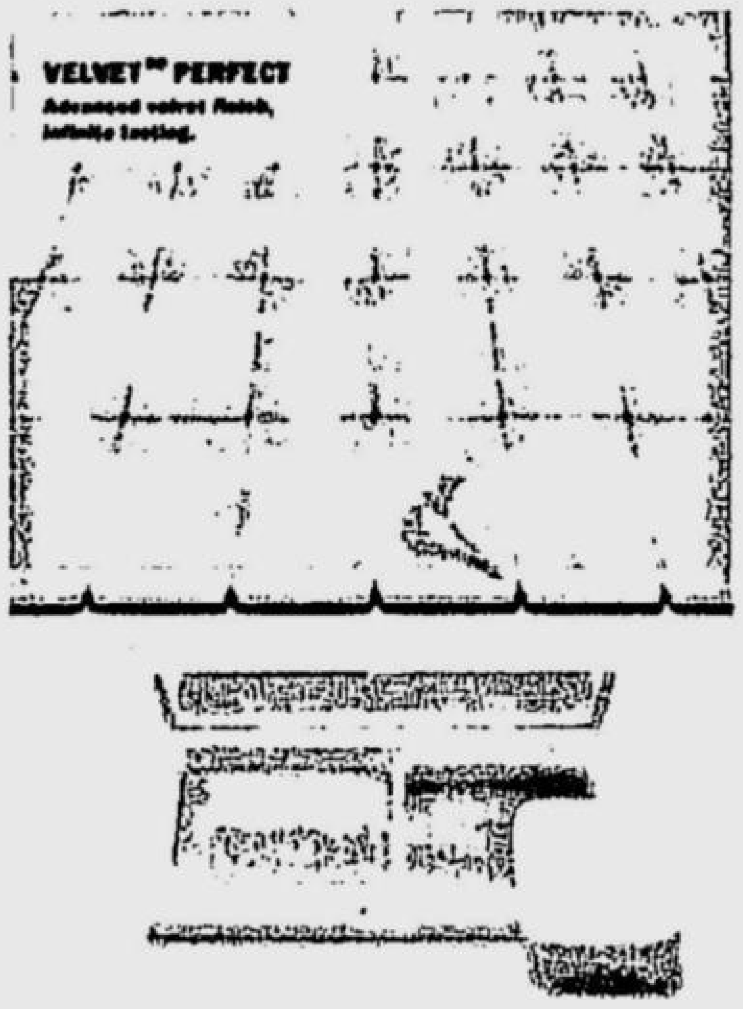
Unbridled yet delicate. Powerful and enchanting. **LANCÔME MIRACLE SO MAGIC!** 30ml, P2,550, **RUSTAN'S**

Just Shop Fave!



Flawless Bombshell

Simply immaculate. The icon of youthful radiance. **SHU UEMURA VELVET PERFECT LASTING POWDER FOUNDATION**, P2,350, **RUSTAN'S**



Hot vixen

Irresistible. Voluptuous. Alluring. Sex appeal. **LANCOME LE ROUGE ABSOLU**, P1,295, **RUSTAN'S**

gadgets

techie-licious

Fashion mavericks will find it hard to keep their hands off these delectable goodies. Go ahead...indulge!

SIEMENS
ESCADA

Siemens SL65

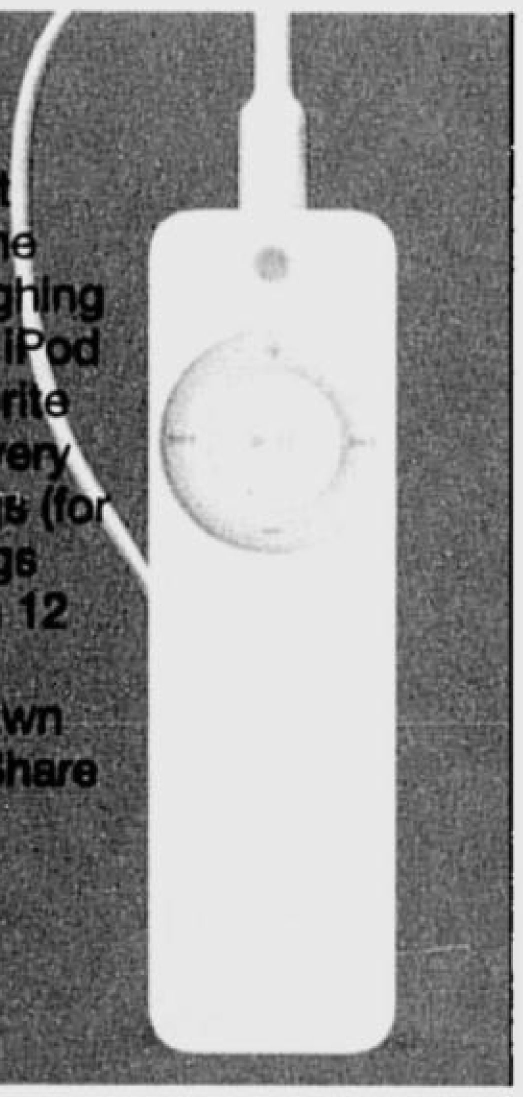
Frosted with original ice crystals by Swarovski, this limited edition **Siemens SL65 Escada** mobile phone is not only stylish, it's techie cool. It features an integrated camera that allows video recording and digital photography with 5x zoom function, a large 65,563 color TFT display that brings images to life, polyphonic ringtones and tri-band functionality. To top it off, it's laced with real freshwater pearl strings.

To order, visit the Escada stores.

iPod Shuffle

Mix things up with the latest sweet thing from Apple -- the bite-size **iPod Shuffle**. Weighing as little as your car key, the iPod Shuffle dispenses your favorite songs in a different order every time. Stores up to 240 songs (for the 1GB model) or 120 songs (for the 512MB model), with 12 hours of continuous playback time. Dance till dawn with its skip-free features. Share it among friends.

Visit the Apple Center at the Cyberzone 5th floor Mega Mall Bldg. B.



directory

A.CONSPIRACY 0917-8997699. **ADMATE** 753-1698. **AJ BAGUIO** 0917-7396492. **BENJIE ANGELES** 0922-8071505. **CAT JUAN** 0917-6283746. **DIX** 0917-5219887. **KATE TORRALBA** 0917-6221229. **NAIL SPA** 5th level Shangri-La Plaza Mall. **RINA ALBERT** katharine_albert@hotmail.com. **RICKY VICENCIO** 0916-3009353. **SUNSET BRAZIL** available at CHOCOLATE CLOTHING CO. and SOUK GALLERY. **TINA DANIAC** 0917-7883521. **URBAN SPA** 5th level Shangri-La Plaza Mall 687-6195.

APPLE CENTER Cyberzone 5th floor Mega Mall Bldg. B. **ARANAZ MANILA** 2nd level City Golf Plaza, Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig. **BOTTEGA VENETA** Greenbelt 4 Ayala Center. **CHOCOLATE CLOTHING CO.** U level Rustan's Makati; Independent Lifestyles at Rockwell Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **ESCADA** 3rd level Shangri-La Plaza Mall. **FIRMA** Greenbelt 3 Ayala Center. **FIRST AID** 2nd floor Greenbelt 3 Ayala Center. **GIRLSHOPPE** Hip 2nd level Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **GREENHILLS TIANGGE** Greenhills Shopping Center. **GUCCI** Greenbelt 4 Ayala Center. ISHQ Astoria Plaza, Escriva Dr., Ortigas Center, Pasig. K2 Glorietta 1 Ayala Center. **LUSTRO** 2nd level Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. MANEL'S Glorietta 2 Ayala Center. **MANGO** Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **MARCELLA'S** Glorietta 1 Ayala Center; 3rd level Robinson's Galleria. **MARION GODART** Independent Lifestyles at Rockwell Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **MIMI COSMETICS** Independent Lifestyles at Rockwell Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **NATURALIZER** Glorietta 4 Ayala Center; 2nd level Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **NINEWEST** Glorietta 3 Ayala Center; Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE** Glorietta 4 Ayala Center; 2nd level Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **POLO GARAGE** Greenbelt 3 Ayala Center; Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **PRETTY FIT** Glorietta 3 Ayala Center; The 5th Shangri-La Plaza Mall. **RUSTAN'S** Alabang; Makati; Shangri-La Mall. **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO** Rustan's Makati; Greenbelt 4 Ayala Center. **SCHU** Glorietta 3 Ayala Center; The 5th Shangri-La Plaza Mall. **SHISEIDO** 2nd floor Glorietta 3 Ayala Center, Power Plant Mall Rockwell Center. **SM DEPARTMENT STORE** Makati; Mega Mall; South Mall. **SPEEDO** Glorietta 3 Ayala Center; 3rd floor The Podium. **SOUK GALLERY** 2nd floor The Crescent 21, San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig. **VIVIAN SARABIA WORLD OF OPTICS** 3rd level Mega Mall Bldg. B. **YRYS** Glorietta 1 Ayala Center; 2nd level Robinson's Galleria. **YSL** Greenbelt 4 Ayala Center.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

window shopping

Garden Fresh

Toss aside rubber flip-flops and reap style that's definetely in season. Heels in juicy colors dressed with tempting flowers that are right for the picking.

Photography **DIX**
Styling **JENNI ER[illegible]N**

(From left to right):
SCHU pink shoe, P1,199; **PRETTY FIT** green shoe, P1,680; **NINEWEST** white shoe, P3,950; Lifestride multi-colored shoe, P2,590, **NATURALIZER; RUSTAN'S** tray, P1,650.

A website for each lifestyle.

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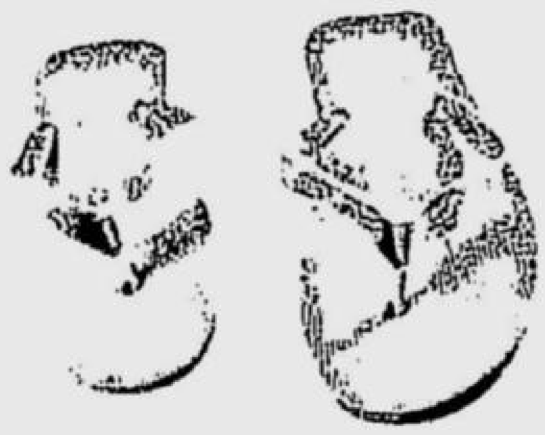

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